

THE LIVES  
OF  
THE FATHERS, MARTYRS  
AND OTHER PRINCIPAL  
SAINTS

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EDITED FOR DAILY USE BY

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VOLUME IV



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## VOLUME IV

OCTOBER 15

ST TERESA, VIRGIN, FOUNDRESS OF THE REFORMATION  
OF THE BAREFOOTED CARMELITES

(A.D. 1582)

[The life of St Teresa, written by herself, holds the first place in the Church among books of this kind after the Confessions of St Austin, says Baillet. The saint finished this work in 1562, twenty years before her death; she afterwards added to it a relation of the foundation of her convent at Avila. The history which she wrote of her Foundations furnishes us with a continuation of her life till within two years, or a year and a half, before her death. F. Ribera, a Jesuit, well known by his learned comments On the Twelve Lesser Prophets, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Apocalypse, who had been sometimes confessarius of the saint, wrote her life with great care and fidelity. We have her own life and her other works, except her letters, translated into English by Mr Abr. Woodhead, in two vols., 4to, 1669; also an abstract of her own Life and Foundations by R. C., in 1757. Her life is compiled in French by M. de Villefort.]

THE humble relation which St Teresa has left us of her own life in obedience to her confessors is the delight of devout persons, not on account of the revelations and visions there recorded, but because in it are laid down the most perfect maxims by which a soul is conducted in the paths of obedience, humility, and self-denial, and especially of prayer and an interior life. St Teresa was born at Avila, in Old Castile, on the 28th of March 1515. Her father, Alphonsus Sanchez, of Cepeda, was a gentleman of a good family, and had three children by a first wife and nine by a second. The name of the latter was Beatrice Ahumada, mother to our saint, another daughter, and seven sons. Don Alphonsus delighted much in reading good books, with which he was well stocked; he was also very charitable to the poor, compassionate to the sick, and tender towards his servants; remarkable for his strict veracity, modesty, and chastity, and very averse from detraction and swearing. Our saint's mother, likewise, was very virtuous, suffered much from frequent sickness, and died happily at the age of three-and-thirty, when Teresa was twelve years old. By the means of the pious instructions and example of her parents, God inclined the tender heart of Teresa from her infancy to his service. Being only seven years old, she took great pleasure in reading the lives of the saints and other pious books, in which she spent much time with a little brother, called Rodrigo, who was near of the same age. They were much amazed at the thought of eternity, and learned already to despise all that passes with time. With feeling sentiments they used to repeat often together, "For ever, for ever, for ever"; and, admiring the victories of the saints, and the everlasting glory which they now possess, they said to one another, "What! for ever they shall see God." The martyrs seemed to them to have bought heaven very cheap by their torments; and, after many conferences together on this subject, they resolved to go into the country of the Moors, in hopes of dying for their faith. They set out privately with great fervour, praying as they went that God

would inspire them with his holy love, that they might lay down their lives for Christ. But, upon the bridge over the Adaja, near the town, they were met by an uncle and brought back to their mother, who was in the greatest frights and had sent to seek them. They were chid by their parents for their unadvised project, and Rodrigo laid all the blame on his sister. The saint and the same little brother formed a design to become hermits at home, and built themselves little hermitages with piles of stones in the garden, but could never finish them. Teresa sought to be much alone, and said very long prayers with great devotion, especially the Rosary; for her mother inspired her tender soul with a singular devotion to the Blessed Virgin. She had in her room a picture of our Saviour discoursing with the Samaritan woman at the well, with which she was much delighted, and she often addressed those words to our Saviour with great earnestness, "Lord, give me of that water"; meaning that of his grace and holy love. In the twelfth year of her age, upon the death of her mother, in great grief she threw herself upon her knees before a picture of the Blessed Virgin, and besought her, with many tears, that she would vouchsafe to be her mother. The saint adds that this action, which she did with great simplicity, she thought afterwards very profitable to her; and found the Blessed Virgin favourable to her in all her requests, and looked upon herself as much indebted to her intercession for the great mercy by which God was pleased to bring her back to a sense of her duty after she had begun to go astray. She aggravates exceedingly her own malice, by which she had been ungrateful to so great and so early favours she had received from God in her tender age.

The most dangerous snare into which she fell was that of idle books and vain company. Romances, or fabulous histories of knight-errantry, were at that time much in fashion in Spain. About that time a certain cousin-german, a worldly young woman, addicted to vanity and fond of reading such books, began to visit her, and by her conversation wrought such a change in Teresa that, forgetting the greatest part of her former devotions, she spent several hours both of the day and night in reading romances with great pleasure. She began at the same time to curl and trim her hair, to use perfumes, to love fine clothes, and the like, out of a desire of pleasing others, though without any bad intention; for she would not for the world have given to anyone an occasion of offending God. None but this kinswoman and some other near relations were allowed by the father to visit his daughter; but even these proved dangerous company to her; and she listened to them with pleasure in their discourse on vanities, toys, and follies, never criminal, yet not good. Thus she gradually fell off from her fervour during three months. She laments grievously this her dangerous fall, and, from her own fatal experience, earnestly conjures all parents to watch over their children, that they may never fall into idle,

vain, and dangerous company, or such books. Her father took notice that her devotion was much cooled, and not being able handsomely to forbid this vain relation his house, he placed his daughter, who was then fifteen years of age, in a very regular convent of Austin nuns in Avila, where many young ladies of her quality were educated. Teresa found a separation from her companions grievous; but as her attachments proceeded only from the natural affectionate disposition of her heart they were soon forgot, and a secret sentiment of honour and of her reputation made her disguise this repugnance. From the precaution which her father had taken, she saw that her fault had been greater than she imagined and began severely to condemn herself for it. The first eight days in the convent seemed tedious to her; but having by that time forgot her former amusements and broken the ties she had contracted in the world, she began to be pleased with her new situation. A devout nun, who was mistress of the pensioners, used frequently to instil into her mind serious reflections on virtue, and repeated often to her that dreadful truth, "Many are called but few are chosen." By the discourse and counsels of this servant of God, Teresa recovered her fervour and earnestly recommended herself to the prayers of the nuns that God would place her in that state in which she might be likely to serve him best; though she had not then the courage to desire to be a nun herself, for the thoughts of a perpetual engagement affrighted her.

After a year and a half spent in this convent, the saint fell dangerously sick and her father took her home. When she had recovered her health, she went to see her eldest sister in the country, who tenderly loved her; and calling to see an uncle, her father's brother, was detained by him some time. His name was Peter Sanchez, of Cepeda; he was a widower, and a very discreet and pious man, and his discourse was most commonly of God and of the vanity of the world. When she returned to her father's house, she began for some time to deliberate with herself about embracing a religious state of life. She at first thought the convent of the Austin nuns, where she lived, too severe, and was inclined to choose a house in which she had a particular great friend; by which circumstance she afterwards feared she had then more regard to the subtle gratification of a secret sensual satisfaction and vanity than to the greater spiritual advancement of her soul. After a violent fever at home (for she had often bad health) she was determined, by reading St Jerom's epistles, to become a nun. Her father would by no means give his consent, but said that after his death she might dispose of herself as she pleased. The saint, fearing from former experience she might again relapse, though she felt an excessive severe interior conflict in leaving her dear father, went privately to the convent of the Incarnation of the Carmelite nuns without the walls of Avila. Upon her taking the habit, God changed the dryness under which she had laboured for some time into an extreme tenderness of devotion, and all her

religious observances gave her great delight. But during her novitiate she felt many severe interior trials, notwithstanding her constant great contentment in this state. She made her profession with extraordinary fervour in November 1534, in the twentieth year of her age. A sickness, which seized her before her profession, increased very much on her after it, with frequent fits of fainting and swooning, and a violent pain at her heart, which sometimes deprived her of her senses. Physicians finding no remedy for her extraordinary case, her father got her removed out of her convent, in which the law of inclosure was not then established. She remained partly at her sister's in the country and partly at Baza, almost a year in the hands of certain able physicians. Their medicines served only to increase her distempers, insomuch, that for the space of three months she suffered such excessive torments, with a continual burning fever, that her sinews began to shrink up, and she could take no rest either day or night. She was also oppressed with a profound sadness of mind. Her father after this caused her to be brought to his own house, where the physicians gave her over; for her distempers had then terminated in a hectic fever, and her sharp pains never left her and afflicted her all over from head to foot. God, however, gave her incredible patience; and she was much comforted by reading the book of Job, with St Gregory's *Morals*, or *Commentary*, and had often in her mouth some of the aspirations of holy Job which expressed his resignation to God. She at length, in August 1537, lay near four days in a trance, or lethargic coma, during which time it was expected that every moment would be her last. It being once imagined that she was dead, a grave was dug for her in the convent, and she would have been buried if her father had not opposed it, and testified that he still perceived in her body certain symptoms of life. Her pains being somewhat abated, she so earnestly desired to return to her monastery that she was carried thither, though her body seemed reduced to skin and bone, and worse than dead through the pain she endured. She continued thus above eight months, and remained a cripple near three years.

The paralytic disorder in which her fevers, violent headaches, and convulsions and contractions of her sinews had terminated began so far to be abated that she was able to crawl upon her hands and feet. After three years' suffering, she was perfectly restored to her health; and she afterwards understood that she had received of God this favour and many others through the intercession of the glorious St Joseph, which she humbly and earnestly implored.<sup>1</sup> She declares that she trembled exceedingly, and praised and thanked the divine mercy with all the powers of her soul, as often as she remembered that "God might have bereaved her of life when she was in a dangerous state; and I think," says she, "I may safely add a thousand times, though I be blamed by him who commanded me to use

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 6.

moderation in the recital of my sins, I have disguised them enough. I beseech him for God's sake that he will not extenuate my faults; for by them the great goodness of God is more manifested, since he so long beareth an unfaithful soul. Praise be to Him for ever. May he rather annihilate me than I should ever hereafter cease to love himself."<sup>1</sup> Her confessor, by whose order she wrote, knew her great propensity to magnify her faults; for which reason he gave her this charge. If, when she arrived at the most perfect purity of heart and divine love she could discern such faults and dangers in her soul, at a time whilst she seemed already a saint in the eyes of men, and received the gift of supernatural prayer, and other eminent virtues, how much ought we to fear in our lukewarm state, and excite ourselves to watchfulness and compunction? St Teresa attributes the good opinion which others then had of her to her own cunning and hypocrisy, though she acknowledges that she was never designedly guilty of any dissimulation, having always abhorred such a baseness. Two great means by which she preserved her soul from many difficulties and snares were her constant and tender charity and goodness towards all persons, by which she always gained the esteem and goodwill of all those with whom she lived or conversed; secondly, an extreme dread and abhorrence of the least shadow of detraction, insomuch that no one durst in the least reflect on any other person in her presence, and from her infancy she had had this rule always before her eyes, in discoursing of others to speak of them in the same manner she would desire others should speak of her.

Who ought not always to tremble for himself and excite himself by humility and holy fear to watch continually, with the utmost attention over his own heart, to apply himself with his whole strength to all his duties, and with the greatest earnestness to call in Omnipotence to his assistance, since this holy virgin, after receiving so many favours from God, fell again from her fervour and devotion? Her prudence and other amiable qualifications gained her the esteem of all that knew her. An affectionate and grateful disposition inclined her to make an obliging return to the civilities which others showed her. And, finding herself agreeable to company, she began to take delight in it, by which she lost that love of retirement which is the soul of a religious or interior life, and in which she had been accustomed to spend almost her whole time in prayer and pious reading. By an irregular custom of her convent she seemed authorized to indulge this dangerous inclination, and spent much time in conversing with seculars at the grate or door of the monastery, and she contracted an intimacy with one whose company was particularly dangerous to her. Such conversation, besides a great loss of time, dissipated her mind, and infused earthly affections and inclinations, which do infinite mischief to a soul whose affections are or ought to be spiritual, and expose her to the utmost dangers.

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 5.

Teresa therefore began to neglect mental prayer, and even persuaded herself that this was a part of humility, as her dissipated life rendered her unworthy to converse so much or so familiarly with God by mental prayer. So subtle is the devil in his snares, knowing that no virtuous person can be deceived but under the appearance or cover of good. Teresa also said to herself there could be no danger or sin in what so many others did, more virtuous than she was, who received frequent visits of secular persons in the parlour. The remonstrances which a senior nun made to her on the impossibility of reconciling so much dissipation of mind and worldly conversation with the spirit and obligations of a religious life were not sufficient to open her eyes.

One day, whilst she was conversing at the grate with a new acquaintance, she seemed to see our Lord, who represented himself to the eyes of her soul with much rigour in his countenance, testifying that her conduct displeased him. She took this for the effect of imagination, and being much importuned to it, still persuaded herself, by the example of others, that there could be no harm in so much exterior conversation, and that no damage resulted from it to her soul. She grievously accuses herself of this fault, and of her blindness in shutting her eyes to many warnings and inspirations, by which she ought to have been made sensible of so great an evil, which she conjures all religious persons to beware of. Her father had been induced by her, when she first learned the use of mental prayer, to apply himself earnestly to it as to the great means of acquiring all perfect interior virtues, and within five or six years he was much improved by that holy exercise. He often called to see her and to converse with her on spiritual things. He thought she assiduously conversed with God, as she had formerly done, when she had lived a year or more in that state of dissipation, having left off mental prayer, contenting herself with only vocal, of which she says, "This was the greatest and worst temptation that ever I had; for by this means I ran headlong upon my own ruin." At length, finding her father's mistake, she disabused him, telling him she no longer used mental prayer, for which she alleged the frequent infirmities to which she was subject. But she adds, "This reason of bodily weakness was not a sufficient cause to make me give over so good a thing, which requires not corporeal strength, but only love and custom. In the midst of sickness the best of prayer may be made; and it is a mistake to think that it can only be made in solitude." Her father, out of the good opinion he had of her, looked upon her excuse as just, and pitied her, because she had enough to do to be able to attend the choir. In 1539 she suffered a great affliction in the loss of her good father, whom she always loved with the most dutiful and tender affection. Though ill herself, she went out of her monastery to assist him in his last sickness, and strained very hard to do him all the service and procure him all the comfort she was able. His

sickness began with a very grievous pain in the shoulders. St Teresa told him, that since he had been much devoted to the mystery of our Saviour carrying his cross, he would do well to conceive that Christ, in his great mercy, had been pleased to give him a feeling of some part of that suffering. With this consideration he was so much comforted that he mentioned his pain no more, nor did he ever let fall the least word of complaint. He expired whilst he was saying the creed. His confessor, F. Vincent Barron or Varron, a learned and pious Dominican friar, whom Teresa at that time also made use of, took pains to make her understand that her soul was in a dangerous way, and that she must not fail to make use of mental prayer. She therefore began to use it again in the twenty-fourth year of her age, and from that time never left it.

This goodness of God towards her, notwithstanding her sloth and rebellions, was to her a subject of continual astonishment and a motive of the strongest love and most feeling gratitude. "Hence," says she, "proceeded my tears, together with a grievous indignation which I conceived against myself, when I considered what a wretched creature I was; for I saw that I was still upon the point of falling again, though my purposes and desires of amendment (as long as those favours lasted) seemed to be firm and strong. I should be glad that all such persons as may read this account of my proceedings should abhor me, seeing my soul so obstinate and ungrateful towards him who had vouchsafed me so great favours. And I wish I could get leave to declare the multitude of times that I failed in my obligation to God in this number of years because I was not supported by the strong pillar of mental prayer. I passed through this tempestuous sea almost twenty years between these fallings and risings, though I rose very imperfectly, since I so soon relapsed." These relapses are meant of those venial sins and imperfections which stopped her progress in the divine service. She adds that, as she was obliged to write this account with exact and entire truth, she must acknowledge that within this term there were many months, and perhaps a whole year, that she gave herself much to prayer without relapsing into vain amusements; but because she remembered little of these good days, she believed they were few; though few days passed in which she had not given a considerable time to mental prayer; and the worse she was in health the more her soul was united to God, and she procured that those who were with her might be so too, and they spoke often of God. Thus, out of twenty-eight years which had passed-when she wrote this, since she began to employ herself diligently in mental prayer, except that one year in which she laid it aside, she spent more than eighteen in this strife. Bishop Ypez assures us from his own knowledge of the saint's interior, and demonstrates from her own words,<sup>1</sup> that she passed these eighteen years in frequent trials of spiritual dryness,

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 5.

intermingled with intervals of heavenly consolation in prayer; and that these faults and dangers, which she continually deplores and extremely exaggerates, consisted chiefly in serious entertainments with affectionate visitants to which the sweetness of her temper and the goodness of her heart inclined her, and which her confessors at that time approved and recommended, though she discovered them to be obstacles to her spiritual perfection and prayer. She conjures everyone, for the love of God, to be assiduous in endeavouring to obtain and cherish the spirit of prayer, and adds the most pathetic exhortations that no one deprive himself of so great a good, in which nothing is to be feared but much to be desired. "I do not see how God can come to us," says the saint, "or enrich us with his graces, if we shut the door against him. Though he is infinitely desirous to communicate himself to us with all his gifts, he will have our hearts to be found disengaged, alone, and burning with a desire to receive him. O Joy of the angels, my Lord, and my God, I cannot think of conversing with you without desiring to melt like wax in the fire of your divine love, and to consume all that is earthly in me by loving you. How infinite is your goodness to bear with and even caress those who are imperfect and bad: recompense the short time they spend with you and, upon their repentance, blot out their faults! This I experienced in myself. I do not see why all men do not approach you, to share in your friendship. Even the wicked, whose affections have no conformity to your spirit, ought to approach you, that they may become good, even though they at first abide with you sometimes with a thousand distractions, as I did."

After twenty years thus spent in the imperfect exercise of prayer, and with many defects, the saint found a happy change in her soul. One day, going into the oratory, seeing a picture of our Saviour covered with wounds in his passion, she was exceedingly moved, so that she thought her very heart was ready to burst. Casting herself down near the picture, and pouring forth a flood of tears, she earnestly besought our Lord to strengthen her that she might never more offend him. She had long been accustomed every night, before she composed herself to rest, to think on our Lord's prayer in the garden and bloody sweat, and was particularly affected with that mystery. From this time she made the sufferings of Christ the ordinary object of her interior conversation with him during the day and night. Being particularly devoted to St Mary Magdalene, she was delighted to place herself in spirit with her at the feet of Jesus, earnestly beseeching her Redeemer not to despise her tears. She always found particular comfort in those saints who, after having been sinners, were converted to our Lord, hoping that by their means he would forgive her as he had done them. Only this reflection discouraged her—that he called them but once, and they returned no more to sin, whereas she had so often relapsed; which afflicted her to the very heart, but the consideration of the love

our Lord bore her made her always confide entirely in his mercy. St Austin, who was an admirable penitent, and the patron of the first nunnery in which she had lived, was one of those saints toward whom she was most tenderly affected. The saint had scarce formed her resolution of serving God perfectly when he vouchsafed to visit her soul with new and extraordinary consolations and favours, regaling her with heavenly sweetness in great abundance; for she tells us he did not require, as in others, that she should have disposed herself for such favours, but only that she was content to receive them. "I never presumed," says she, "to desire that he should give me so much as the least tenderness of devotion; I begged only for grace never to offend him, and for pardon of my past sins; and I never durst deliberately desire any spiritual delights. It was an infinite mercy that he would suffer me to appear in his presence. Only once in my whole life, being in great spiritual dryness, I desired him to afford me some little spiritual comfort; but as soon as I had reflected what I had done I was filled with confusion, and the grief I felt for my want of humility obtained for me that which I had presumed to beg." The saint, before she gives an account of the supernatural favours she had received, conjures her confessor, Gardia de Toledo (by whose order and to whom she wrote this relation), entirely to conceal all she says on that head, and publish only her sins, imperfections, and the indifferent actions of her life.<sup>1</sup>

Describing the state of her soul with regard to her manner of prayer, she says she began to consider Christ as present in her soul in the same manner as she had been accustomed to do after communion; thus she entertained herself with him in her ordinary actions, and in mental prayer. From the twentieth year after she had first applied herself to this exercise, she made little use of interior discoursing or reasoning to inflame her affections. The tenderness of her love, and her feeling sense of her own wants, formed her a prayer without studied or chosen words, or long reasoning and reflection in meditation. St Teresa says she had been before accustomed to feel often a tender heavenly sweetness in her devotions; but at this time her soul began to be frequently raised by God to the sublimer degrees of supernatural passive prayer: for she observes that the servants of divine love, in which they chiefly advance by prayer, arrive not on a sudden at the highest degree of prayer. The gift of prayer and an interior life have difficulties to be overcome which cost much to flesh and blood, especially in the beginning or first steps by which a soul is prepared to receive it.

St Teresa, after having exercised herself twenty years in mental prayer, began to withdraw herself from the conversation of secular persons, and other occasions of dissipation and little faults which she exceedingly exaggerates, and was favoured by God very frequently with the prayer

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 10.

of Quiet, and also with that of Union, which latter sometimes continued a long time with great improvement of her soul, and with excessive heavenly joy and love. The examples of certain women who had been miserably the dupes of a deluded imagination and of the devil much terrified her; and though she was persuaded her favours were from God, she was so much perplexed with these fears that she resolved to take advice. The first person to whom she opened herself was a gentleman of the town named Francis of Salsedo, a married man, who for thirty-eight years had practised mental prayer with great assiduity, and with his virtuous lady, who concurred with him in his great charities, fasts, and other exercises of piety, was an example of virtue to the whole country. This gentleman introduced to her Dr Daza, a learned and virtuous priest; and after an examination, from what she declared of herself both judged her to be deluded by the devil, saying such divine favours were not consistent with a life so full of imperfections as she exposed hers to be. Her alarms being increased by this decision, the gentleman advised her to speak with one of those first fathers of the Society of Jesus who were lately come into Spain, and were eminent for their manner of prayer and their experience in virtue and an interior life. This gentleman (to whom the saint says she owed her salvation and her comfort) bade her not be discouraged because she was not delivered from all her imperfections in one day; for God would do it by little and little, and said that he himself had remained whole years in reforming some very light things. By the means of certain friends one of these fathers of the Society visited her, to whom she made a very careful general confession in which, with the confession of her sins, she gave him an account of all the particulars through the course of her whole life relating to her manner of prayer and her late extraordinary favours. The father assured her these were divine graces; but told her she had neglected to lay the true foundation of an interior life by the practice of a universal self-denial and mortification, by which a person learns to govern his senses, subdue entirely his passions, and cut off all inordinate attachments in the heart. By the advice of this confessor, St Teresa made every day a meditation on some part of our Lord's passion, and set herself heartily to practise some kinds of penance which were very inconsistent with her weak health; for on pretence of her great infirmities she had thought little of any other mortifications than such as were general. By the prudent order of the same servant of God, though he judged her extraordinary gusts in prayer to be from God, she endeavoured for two months to resist and reject them. But her resistance was in vain; and when she laboured the most to turn herself from heavenly communications, our Lord overwhelmed her most abundantly with them. St Francis Borgia, at that time commissary-general of the Jesuits in Spain, coming to Avila, was desired to speak to the saint, and having heard her account of her prayer and state, he assured her without

hesitation that the spirit of God was the author of her prayer; commended her resistance for a trial during the two months past, but advised her not to resist any elevations if our Lord was pleased to visit her so in prayer, provided she had no hand in endeavouring to procure them; and he prescribed her greater mortifications than she had hitherto undertaken.

Her confessor being called away, she chose another of the Society of Jesus. This was F. Balthasar Alvarez du Paz, a very spiritual man who, through severe interior trials during the space of twenty years, arrived at the perfection of holy contemplation and an interior life. This excellent director took notice of certain immortifications in the conduct of St Teresa contrary to her perfect sanctification, especially in her remaining still sensible to the satisfaction of ingenious, witty, and learned conversation, of which he put her in mind. Her answer was that she had hoped her motive in it had been always for the best, and that it seemed a kind of ingratitude in her entirely to deny herself to certain friends. He told her she would do well to beg of God that he would direct her to do what was most pleasing to him, and for that purpose to recite every day the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*. She did so for a considerable time; and one day whilst she was reciting that hymn she was favoured with a rapture, in which she heard these words, which were spoken to her in the most interior part of her soul: "I will not have thee hold conversation with men, but with angels." She was exceedingly amazed at this voice, which was the first she heard in that manner: from that time she renounced all company but what business, or the direct service of God, obliged her to converse with.<sup>1</sup> The saint had afterwards frequent experience of such interior speeches after raptures, and explains how they are even more distinct and clear than those which men hear with their corporeal ears, and how they are also operative, producing in the soul the strongest impressions and sentiments of virtue, and filling her with an assurance of their truth, and with joy and peace; whereas all the like illusions of the devil leave her much disquieted and disturbed, and produced no good effects, as she experienced two or three times.<sup>2</sup> The saint earned these great heavenly comforts by severe sufferings; or rather God purified and improved her soul in his love and all virtues, both by his sweetest consolations and the sharpest trials. Whilst F. Balthasar Alvarez was her director, she suffered grievous persecutions for three years, and during two of them extreme interior desolation of soul, intermixed with gleams of spiritual comfort and favours.<sup>3</sup> It was her earnest desire that all her heavenly communications should be kept secret; but they were become the common subject of discourse in every conversation and even in the public schools, and she was everywhere censured and ridiculed as an enthusiast or hypocrite: her confessor was persecuted on

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. c. 25; Yepez, c. 12, p. 86.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. c. 25.

her account. Six religious men of note, who had been her friends, after a conference on this subject, decided that she seemed deluded by the devil, and prevailed on F. Balthasar to go with them to her and to order her not to communicate so frequently (which was her greatest support and comfort), not to live so strictly retired, and not to prolong her meditations beyond the time prescribed by the rule of her house. F. Balthasar, indeed, bade her be of good courage; for if she was deluded by the devil he could not hurt her, provided she laboured only to advance in charity, patience, humility, and all virtues. One day the saint, after having suffered a long and grievous desolation and affliction of spirit, suddenly fell into a rapture and heard a voice interiorly saying to her, "Fear not, daughter, for it is I, and I will not forsake thee: do not fear."<sup>1</sup> Her mind was instantly quieted and composed, and filled with light; her soul was drowned in heavenly sweetness and joy; and being endued with strength and courage, she challenged the devils, making no more reckoning of them than of so many flies, and saying to herself that God, whose servant she desired to be, is all-powerful, and under his protection nothing could hurt her; and as she pretended and desired no other thing than to please him, she joyfully met all sufferings and renounced all ease and contentment, if she could only be so happy as to accomplish in all things his holy will.

A confessor whom the saint made use of once during the absence of F. Balthasar told her that her prayer was an illusion, and commanded her when she saw any vision to make the sign of the cross and to insult the vision, as of a fiend. Therefore, in simplicity, she obeyed this order of her confessor; and the saint assures us that Christ himself in several visions approved her conduct in so doing.<sup>2</sup> She adds that in these visions to use some exterior action of scorn was a terrible thing to her, as she could not possibly believe but that it was God. "And I besought our Lord," says she, "with much instance to free me from being deceived; and this I did continually and with abundance of tears. I begged it also by the prayers of SS. Peter and Paul; because, as I had my first vision on their festival, our Lord told me they would take such care of me that I should not be deceived. Accordingly, I have often seen very clearly these two glorious saints, my very good patrons, upon my left hand. But this making signs of scorn when I saw the vision of our Lord gave me excessive pain and trouble. For when I saw him present before my eyes, it was impossible for me to believe it was the devil. That I might not be perpetually crossing myself, I took a cross into my hands, and this I did almost always. I used not the signs of scorn often, for this afflicted me too much; and I remembered the affronts which the Jews put upon our Lord; and I humbly besought him to pardon me, since I did this in obedience to those whom he had appointed in his own place. He bid me not be troubled at it, for

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. c. 26 and 29.

I did well in obeying them; but he said he would bring them to understand the truth": which they afterwards did. "When they forbade me the use of mental prayer, our Lord appeared angry at it, and bade me tell them this was tyranny. He also gave me reasons to know that this was not the devil. Once when I held in my hand the cross which was at the end of my beads, he took it into his hand; and when he gave it me again, it appeared to be of four great stones, incomparably more precious than diamonds. A diamond is but a counterfeit in comparison of these. They had the five wounds of our Lord engraved upon them after a most curious manner. He told me I should always see this cross so from that time forward, and so I did; for I no longer saw the matter of which the cross was made, but only those precious stones—though no other saw them but myself. When I was commanded to use this resistance to those favours, they increased much more and I was never out of prayer. Even whilst I slept I was uttering amorous complaints to our Lord, and his love was still increased in me. Nor was it in my power to give over thinking on him, and least of all when I endeavoured at it. Yet I obeyed as well as I could, though I was able to do little or nothing in that respect. Our Lord never freed me from obeying them; yet he gave me all assurance that it was he, and instructed me what I should say to them. There grew in me so impetuous a love of God that I found myself even dying through a desire to see him (my true life), nor did I know how or where to find this life but by death," &c.<sup>1</sup> Bishop Yepez informs us<sup>2</sup> that this cross fell afterwards into the hands of the saint's sister, Jane of Ahumada, who died at Alva, and he relates some miracles wrought by it. Pope Gregory XV, in the bull of the canonization of St Teresa, commends this example of her obedience as the test of her spirit and of her visions, &c.: "By the command of her confessors, she humbly showed marks of contempt under the visions of our Lord, not without a great recompence of her obedience. She was wont to say that she might be deceived in discerning visions and revelations, but could not in obeying superiors," says this pope.

Though, after two years spent in frequent interior desolation, the visits of the Holy Ghost restored her interior peace with great sweetness and spiritual light, which dispelled her former darkness, she continued to suffer a whole year longer a persecution from her friends which seemed general. She had learned to be so perfectly dead to herself that, with regard to herself, she was not the least concerned what the whole world said or did concerning her; but the judgment of others as to her state gave her still frequent great alarms and fears, which contributed both to purify her soul and to prove more clearly her spirit of prayer. In 1559, St Peter of Alcantara, commissary-general and visitor of the Franciscans, coming to Avila, conversed several days with St Teresa. Few saints seem to have

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. c. 14, p. 109.

been more experienced in an interior life, or better versed in the supernatural gifts of prayer, than this holy man. He discovered in Teresa the most certain marks of the wonderful graces of the Holy Ghost, expressed great compassion for her sufferings from the contradictions and slanders even of good men and learned doctors, and publicly declared that, except the truths of holy faith, nothing appeared to him more evident than that her soul was conducted by the spirit of God; but he foretold her that she was not come to an end of her persecutions and sufferings. The authority of this glorious saint, the reputation of whose judgment and sanctity gave his confident decision the greatest weight, turned the stream exceedingly in favour of the holy virgin. It is not to be expressed what comfort and advantage she received from the conversation of this holy man, who strongly recommended her defence and direction to F. Balthasar, at that time her ordinary confessor, though he was shortly after removed to another place. After the trials already made, and the judgment passed by St Peter of Alcantara, not only F. Balthasar but many other persons of the greatest piety, learning, and authority declared confidently that the marks and reasons were most clear and convincing that in her ecstasies and prayer she was conducted in a supernatural manner by the Divine Spirit.

In raptures she was sometimes elevated in the air, of which she gives the following description. Having said that the soul has a power of resisting in the prayer of union, but not in raptures, in which her soul was absolutely carried away so that she could not stop it, she adds, "Sometimes my whole body was carried with it, so as to be raised up from the ground, though this was seldom. When I had a mind to resist these raptures, there seemed to me somewhat of so mighty force under my feet, which raised me up, that I know not what to compare it to. All my resistance availed little; for when our Lord hath a mind to do a thing, no power is able to stand against it."

Bishop Yepez relates<sup>1</sup> that the saint, when she was prioress of the convent of St Joseph at Avila, as she was going to receive the communion at the hands of the Bishop Don Alvarez of Mendoza, was raised in a rapture higher than the grate through which (as is usual in nunneries) she was to receive the holy communion; of which also sister Mary Baptist, prioress of Valladolid, was an eye-witness, with others. Likewise Bannes, a very learned theologian of the Order of St Dominic, whose name is famous in the schools, and who was for some time confessor of St Teresa, testified that the saint one day in public, as she was raised in the air in the choir, held herself by some rails and prayed thus, "Lord, suffer not, for such a favour, a wicked woman to pass for virtuous." He mentions other instances in the public choir; but says that, at her earnest request, this never happened to her in public during the last fifteen years of her

<sup>1</sup> Yepez, c. 15, p. 117.

life. Richard of St Victor<sup>1</sup> teaches that raptures arise from a vehement fire of divine love in the will, or from excessive spiritual joy, or from a beam of heavenly light darting upon the understanding. We learn from St Teresa that these three effects of an external grace usually concur in raptures. She says the faculties or powers of the soul are lost by being most straightly united to God, so that she thought she neither saw, nor heard, nor perceived anything about her; but this was only for a very short space during the highest part of some raptures: during the rest of the rapture, the soul, though she can do nothing of herself as to the exterior or the voluntary motions of the body, understands and hears things as if they were spoken from afar off. When she returns to herself, her powers continue in some degree absorbed sometimes for two or three days. In these raptures a soul clearly sees, and, as it were, feels how perfectly a nothing all earthly things are: how gross an error and abominable a lie it is to give the name of honour to what the world calls so: real honour being built on truth, not on a lie. A like idea she has of the vanity and folly of love of money, and of the baseness of earthly pleasures; and she learns that nothing is really true but what conduces to virtue, and makes no account of anything which brings us not nearer to God. In the rapture she acquires also a liberty and dominion, which results from her perfect disengagement from creatures, upon which she looks down as raised above them and above herself; and she is filled with confusion that she should have been so miserable as to have ever been entangled by them. She looks back upon her former blindness with amazement; and considers with compassion the misery of those who still remain in the like. But no effects of a rapture are so remarkable or profitable as the clear sight which the soul receives in it of her own imperfections, baseness, and nothingness; together with the most profound sentiments of humility, and, on the other side, a great knowledge of the goodness, majesty, and boundless power of God, with the ardent love and desires of speedily possessing him for ever. Hence St Teresa, when her soul was deeply wounded and totally inflamed, as it were, by a spark falling from the immense fire of the love our Lord bore her, often repeated with incredible earnestness that verse: "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." She remained once about an hour in that condition, and our Lord, showing most admirable things, said to her, "See what they lose who are against me; do not forbear to tell them of it." "But, O Lord," said the saint, "what good will my telling do them, whom their own malice blindeth, unless thou givest them light?" She adds that the contempt of this world, and the desires of heaven with which these visions inspired her, could not be declared. "Hence, also," says she, "I lost the fear of death, of which I had formerly a great apprehension."

<sup>1</sup> Lib. v. de Contempl. c. 5.

She sometimes saw the mystery of one God in three persons in so clear and wonderful manner as much comforted and amazed her: sometimes Christ in the bosom of his Father, and frequently his humanity in its glorified state so beautiful and delightful that she comprehended that to behold one glorified body, especially the adorable humanity of Christ, would alone be a great felicity.<sup>1</sup> She was favoured with many visions in the holy eucharist; and sometimes with apparitions of the Blessed Virgin, St Joseph, and other saints; and frequently of angels of different orders standing near her, though she did not know their orders, for they never told her this. One of these visions she describes as follows: <sup>2</sup> “ I saw an angel very near me, towards my left side, in a corporeal form (which is not usual with me; for though angels are often represented to me, it is only by the intellectual vision). This angel appeared rather little than big, and very beautiful; his face was so inflamed that he seemed to be one of those highest angels called seraphims, who seem to be all on fire with divine love. He had in his hand a long golden dart, and at the end of the point methought there was a little fire; and I conceived that he thrust it several times through my heart after such a manner that it passed through my very bowels; and when he drew it out, methought it pulled them out with it, and left me wholly inflamed with a great love of God.” She says that this wound caused a great pain in her soul, which also affected her body; but this extremity of pain was accompanied with excessive delight, and whilst it continued she went up and down like one transported, not caring to see or speak, but only to burn and be consumed with that pain, which was a greater happiness to her than any that can be found in created things. The saint’s desire to die, that she might be speedily united to God, was tempered by her ardent desire to suffer for his love; and the excess of his love for her, and of the comforts which he so often afforded her, made her esteem it as of no account that she should desire to suffer afflictions for his sake. And she writes, “ It seems to me there is no reason why I should live but only to suffer; and accordingly this is the thing which I beg with most affection of God. Sometimes I say to him with my whole heart, Lord, either to die, or to suffer, I beg no other thing for myself. It comforts me also to hear the clock strike; for so methinks I draw a little nearer to the seeing of God; since one hour more of my life is past.” <sup>3</sup> The saint mentions several instances of persons of remarkable virtue, some in a secular, others in a religious state, of her own nunnery, and of several other Orders, whose souls she saw in visions freed from purgatory through the prayers of devout persons, and carried up to heaven several hours or days after their departure; though their penitential and holy lives, their patience in long illnesses, their great regularity in their convent, and their tears, humility, and compunction at their death, which edified all who knew

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. c. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. c. 40.

them, had persuaded her they would be admitted straight to glory. Besides the particular instances she relates, she adds she had seen the same of many others. "But among all the souls which I have seen, I have not known any one to have escaped purgatory except three, F. Peter of Alcantara, a religious man of the Order of St Dominic (F. Peter Ivagnez), and a Carmelite friar."<sup>1</sup> She was given to understand that this last was exempted from purgatory by the indulgences granted to those of his Order, he having been a religious man and having faithfully observed his profession; "which," she says, "I suppose was signified to me to imply that more is required to make a religious man than the wearing of the habit," namely, the spirit and faithful observance of this rule. Spiritual graces require this condition. All these visions and raptures tended exceedingly to the spiritual improvement of the saint in humility, divine love, and all other virtues. When she once grieved that all her Spanish pious books were taken from her, our Lord said to her, "Let not this trouble thee; I will give thee a living book."<sup>2</sup> This she experienced by mental prayer and his heavenly communications. She learned by these raptures great heavenly mysteries, secrets, and things to come, which she foretold; and, as she assures us, not the least tittle of what was thus revealed to her ever failed to come to pass, though, at the time of her revelation and prediction, all appearances were contrary. She mentions that God, through her prayers, brought several sinners to repentance, and granted great graces to many others, as she learned by revelations. Also, that at her earnest request he restored sight to one that was almost quite blind, and health to some others labouring under painful and dangerous distempers.<sup>3</sup>

How perfectly she excelled in obedience appears from this circumstance, that on all occasions she preferred this virtue to her revelation, saying in them she might be deceived by the devil, but could not in obedience. In founding her convents and many other things, when she had received a command from Christ, she availed not herself hereof but waited till by the rules of obedience she was authorized to execute the divine commission, depending, however, steadfastly on him who promised or commanded the undertaking, that he would carry the same by the regular means into execution; in which she was never disappointed. F. Balthasar Alvarez said of her: "Do you see Teresa of Jesus? What sublime graces has she received of God! yet she is like the most tractable little child with regard to everything I can say to her." She called obedience the soul of a religious life, the short and sure road to perfect sanctity, the most powerful means to subject our will perfectly to that of God. She used often to repeat: "Obedience is put to the test in different commands." All murmuring, excuses, or delays she condemns as contrary to obedience. As for her own part, even when superior, she studied by many contrivances

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. c. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. c. 39.

to obey others, and always obeyed her confessor as she would have done God himself.

A desire most perfectly to obey God in all things moved her to make a vow never with full knowledge to commit a venial sin, and in every action to do what seemed to her most perfect; a vow which in persons less perfect would be unlawful, because it would be an occasion of transgressions. Humility, the root of true obedience and the fruitful parent of other virtues, was that in which she placed her strength, and her humility increased in proportion as she received from God the more extraordinary favours, which she saw to be his pure gifts, without her contributing any to them; and because she profited so little by them, she condemned and humbled herself the more. The virtues of others seemed to her more meritorious, and she conceived that there was not in the world one worse than herself.<sup>1</sup> Hence she was the more inflamed to love and praise the gracious goodness of God, to whom alone she entirely ascribed his gifts, not usurping an atom of them to herself, and separating from them her infidelities and miseries, which was all that was of her own growth, and of which, by an infused light, she had the most extensive and fullest knowledge and the most sincere feeling. She sincerely looked upon herself as deserving every sort of disgrace and contempt, as one who deserved hell, and whose only support against despair was the infinite mercy of God; and she endeavoured to convince others of her wretchedness and grievous sinfulness with as great solicitude and affection as an ambitious proud man desires to pass for virtuous. There are many who affect to use this language of themselves, but cannot bear from others any contempt or injurious treatment. This St Teresa received on all occasions with great inward joy and exceedingly desired; and all honours and marks of esteem were most grievous to her. This satisfaction which the heart feels in its own just contempt is, as it were, the marrow and pith of true humility, says Bishop Yepez.<sup>2</sup>

Nothing seems a clearer proof how perfectly our saint was dead to herself by sincere humility than the artless manner in which she constantly, and not in certain occasions only, speaks of herself with a view to debase herself in everything. Her exterior conduct breathed this sincere disposition of her soul. It was her pleasure to steal secretly into the choir after the office to fold up the cloaks of the sisters, to choose for her part of work to sweep the most filthy places in the yard, and to perform the lowest offices in serving at table or in the kitchen, in which place she was often seen suddenly absorbed in God, with the utensils or instruments of her business in her hands; for every place was to her a sanctuary, and no employment hindered her from offering to God a continual sacrifice of humility and of ardent love and praise. Nothing is more admirable than

<sup>1</sup> Relation of herself to her confessors, p. 195, &c.

<sup>2</sup> R. 2, c. 7.

the lessons of humility which she gives in her writings, and which she inculcates to her religious, recommending to them especially never to excuse themselves in faults, never to murmur, but to rejoice in abjection; never to justify themselves when accused falsely (unless charity or prudence make it necessary); to abhor every thought or mark of pre-eminence or distinction of ranks, which she extremely exaggerates as the bane of all true humility and virtue in a religious community, &c.<sup>1</sup>

Her spirit of penance was not less edifying than her humility. Who, without floods of tears for his own insensibility, can call to mind the wonderful compunction with which the saints wept and punished themselves their whole lives for the lightest transgressions? St Teresa having had the misfortune in her youth to have been betrayed into certain dangerous amusements and vanities, though she would not for the world have ever consented knowingly to any mortal sin, had always hell and her sins before her eyes, penetrated with the compunction of a Magdalen or a Thais. Her love of penance, after she was well instructed in that virtue, made her desire to set no bounds to her mortifications by which she chastised and subdued her flesh by long watchings in prayer, by rigorous disciplines, hair cloths, and austere fasts. Moved by this spirit of penance, she restored the original severity of her rule, and notwithstanding her bad health observed its fasts of eight months in the year, and other austerities, unless some grievous fit of illness made them absolutely impossible. On such occasions it was with great repugnance that she consented to use some small dispensations, but said she understood this repugnance proceeded rather from self-love than from a spirit of penance. Her prudence and pious zeal for religious discipline and penance appear in the caution with which she guarded against the granting dispensations too easily on account of weak health, which opens a wide door to all relaxations in religious orders. She tells her nuns that it is often the devil that suggests the idea of imaginary indispositions, or that sloth and immortification magnifies those that are slight; that it is often a mark of self-love to complain of little ailments, and that the more the body is indulged the more numerous and craving its demands and necessities grow.<sup>2</sup> She insists on the universal self-denial, by which a religious person studies to do his own will in nothing; which practice, if it sounds harsh, will be found sweet, and will bring much contentment, holy peace, and comfort.<sup>3</sup> When one asked her advice about impure temptations, she answered that she knew not what they meant. A noble and generous disposition of soul inclined our saint to conceive the most tender sentiments of gratitude toward all men from whom she had ever received the least service. The gratitude she expressed to God for his immense favours was derived from a higher source.<sup>4</sup> In her writings

<sup>1</sup> Way of Perfection, c. 36, 37; her own life, c. 30, 31, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Way of Perfection, c. 10. <sup>3</sup> Ibid. c. 13. <sup>4</sup> Her own life, c. 39.

she everywhere speaks with respect and affection of her persecutors; and, putting pious constructions on their words and actions, represents them always as perfect servants of God and her true friends. Contumelies she always bore in silence and with joy. She often said of those that reviled her that they were the only persons that truly knew her. Under grievous slanders with which she was attacked at Seville, one asked her how she could hold her peace. She answered with a smile, "No music is so agreeable to my ears. They have reason for what they say, and speak truth." Her invincible patience under all pains of sickness, provocations, and disappointments; her firm confidence in God and in her crucified Redeemer under all storms and difficulties; and her undaunted courage in bearing incredible labours and persecutions and in encountering dangers, cannot be sufficiently admired. God once said to her in a vision, "Dost thou think that merit consists in enjoying? no: but rather in working, in suffering, and in loving. He is most beloved by my Father on whom he lays the heaviest crosses, if these sufferings are accepted and borne with love. By what can I better show my love for thee than by choosing for thee what I chose for myself?"

An eminent spirit of prayer, founded in sincere humility and perfect self-denial, was the great means by which God raised this holy virgin to such a heroic degree of sanctity. If she remained so long imperfect in virtue, and was slow in completing the victory over herself, it was because for some time she did not apply herself with a proportioned assiduity to the practice of devout prayer, some of her confessors having diverted her from it on account of her ill-health and exterior employments; which mistaken advice was to her of infinite prejudice, as she grievously laments. F. Balthasar Alvarez took much pains with very little progress for twenty years on the same account;<sup>1</sup> and sister Gertrude Moor, the devout Benedictin nun, complains she had been led into the like false persuasion by directors unacquainted with the rules of an interior life. A right method of prayer replenished all the saints with a spirit of devotion which wrought a wonderful reformation of their affections, and changed their interior so as to make them on a sudden spiritual men. St Teresa inculcates above all things in her writings the incomparable advantages of this spirit of prayer, and gives excellent lessons upon that important subject. Our divine Redeemer and the mystery of his incarnation and death were a great object of her adoration and most tender devotion. She suggests this often as the most easy method for beginners to accustom themselves to the familiar use of aspirations, that they imagine themselves in spirit conversing with Christ, representing his humanity as present with them, whether by their side or in their heart. She observes that all religious persons are not called to contemplation,<sup>2</sup> but all can use assiduous prayer

<sup>1</sup> See his life by Ven. F. Lewis de Ponte.

<sup>2</sup> Way of Perfection, c. 17.

with aspirations. It is a maxim which she strongly inculcates that the most advanced ought not entirely to abandon the method of sometimes representing to themselves Christ as a man, and considering him as the object of their devotions, and this sometimes occupied her soul in her highest raptures.<sup>1</sup> Her singular devotion to the holy sacrament of the altar appears in her works. She used to say that one communion is enough to enrich a soul with all spiritual treasures of grace and virtue, if she put no obstacles. This, her devotion, sprang from that inflamed love of God which all her actions and writings breathe.<sup>2</sup> From the same source proceeded her burning zeal for the conversion of sinners, whose souls she continually recommended to the divine mercy with many tears,<sup>3</sup> charging her religious never to cease from that office of charity, and from praying also for those ministers of God who labour for the salvation of souls.<sup>4</sup> Her grief for the wicked was inexpressible, and she was ready to suffer with joy a thousand deaths for one soul.

St Teresa, burning with a desire to promote with her whole strength the greater sanctification of her own soul and that of others, and of labouring to secure by the most perfect penance her eternal salvation, concerted a project of establishing a reform in her Order. The rule which had been drawn up by Albert, patriarch of Jerusalem, was very austere; but in process of time several relaxations were introduced, and a mitigation of this Order was approved by a bull of Eugenius IV in 1431. In the convent of the Incarnation at Avila, in which the saint lived, other relaxations were tolerated, especially that of admitting too frequent visits of secular friends at the grate in the parlour or speak-house. St Teresa one day expressing a great desire of living according to the original institute of the Order, her niece, Mary d'Ocampe, then a pensioner in that house, offered one thousand ducats to found a house for such a design, and a secular widow lady, Guyomar d'Ulloa, zealously encouraged the design; which was approved by St Peter of Alcantara, St Lewis Bertrand, and the Bishop of Avila, and the saint was commanded by Christ, in several visions and revelations which she recounts, to undertake the same, with assured promises of success and his divine protection. The lady Guyomar procured the licence and approbation of F. Angelo de Salazar, provincial of the Carmelites in those parts. No sooner had the project taken wind but he was obliged by the clamours which were raised against it to recall his licence, and a furious storm fell upon the saint through the violent opposition which was made by all her fellow nuns, the nobility, the magistrates, and the people. She suffered the most outrageous calumnies with perfect calmness of mind and silence, contenting herself with earnestly recommending to God his own work. In the meantime, F. Yvagnez, a Dominican,

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 27, &c.; Castle of the Soul, Mans. 6, c. 7.

<sup>2</sup> See especially Med. 16, and her thoughts or conceptions of divine love, or Exp. on the Canticles.

<sup>3</sup> Med. 10, &c.

<sup>4</sup> Way of Perfection, c. 1, 3, 35; Med. 10; Castle of the Soul, Mans. 7.

esteemed one of the most virtuous and learned men of that age, secretly encouraged the saint, and assisted Madam Guyomar to pursue the enterprise, together with Madam Jane of Ahumada, a married sister of the saint, who began with her husband to build a new convent at Avila in 1561, but in such a manner that the world took it for a house intended for herself and her family. Their son, Gonzales, a little child, happened to be crushed by a wall which fell upon him in raising this building, and was carried without giving any signs of life to Teresa, who, taking him in her arms, put up her ardent sighs to God, and after some minutes restored him perfectly sound to his mother, as was proved in the process of the saint's canonization.<sup>1</sup> The child used afterwards often to tell his aunt that it was a duty incumbent on her to secure his salvation by her prayers and instructions, seeing it was owing to her that he was not long ago in heaven. After a most virtuous life, he died soon after St Teresa in extraordinary sentiments of piety. A great strong wall of this house falling in the night as soon as it was finished, many were discouraged; but the saint said it was the effect of the impotent rage and jealousy of the devil. The lady Louisa de la Cerda, sister to the Duke of Medina Celi, being in the deepest affliction for the loss of her husband, Count Arias Pardo, prevailed upon the provincial of the Carmelites to send an order to Teresa, at Avila, sixty miles from Toledo, to repair to her in that city. The saint remained in her house above half a year, and promoted exceedingly the spirit and practice of eminent virtue, not only with the lady, who had for her the highest veneration, but with her whole household and many other persons. All this time she abated nothing of her usual mortifications and devotions, and her provincial no sooner released her from the tie of obedience which he had imposed on her of living in the house of this lady, and left it to her choice either to go or stay, but she returned to her monastery of the Incarnation at Avila. A little before she came back, at the time of the election of a prioress, several of the nuns were very desirous she should be chosen for that office, the very thought of which very much afflicted her; and though she was willing readily to endure any kind of torment for God, she could not prevail with herself to accept of this charge; for, besides the trouble in a numerous community, such as this was, and other reasons, she never loved to be in office, fearing it would greatly endanger her conscience. She therefore wrote to the nuns who were warmest for having her chosen, earnestly entreating them not to be so much her enemies. Our Lord, one day when she was thanking him that she was absent during the noise of the election, said to her in a vision, "Since thou desirest a cross, a heavy one is prepared for thee. Decline it not, for I will support thee: go courageously and speedily." Fearing this cross was the office of prioress, she wept bitterly; but soon after heard that another person

<sup>1</sup> Yepez, b. 2, c. 5; *Acta Caneniz.*; *St Teresiae, Parisiis*, 1625; *Villefore, Vie de St Terese*, t. ii.

was chosen, for which she gave God most sincere thanks,<sup>1</sup> and set out for Avila. The same evening that she arrived at Avila, the pope's brief for the erection of her new convent was brought thither. St Peter of Alcantara, who happened to pass that way, Don Francisco de Salsedo (a pious gentleman with whom St Peter lodged), and the famous Dr Daza persuaded the bishop to concur, and the new monastery of St Joseph was established by his authority and made subject to him, on St Bartholomew's day, in 1562, the blessed sacrament being placed in the church, and the saint's niece, who had given a thousand ducats, and three other novices, taking the habit. Hereupon a great noise was raised against the saint in the town; the prioress of the Incarnation sent for her from St Joseph's, and, the provincial being called, the saint was ordered to remain in her old monastery of the Incarnation, though they were somewhat pacified when the saint had clearly shown them that she had not taken the least step contrary to her rule, or against the duty of obedience. The governor and magistrates would have had the new monastery demolished had not F. Bannes, the learned Dominican, dissuaded them from so hasty a resolution. Amidst the most violent slanders and persecutions the saint remained calm, recommending to God his own work, and was comforted by our Lord, who said to her in a vision, "Dost thou not know that I am Mighty? What dost thou fear? Be assured the monastery shall not be dissolved. I will accomplish all I have promised thee." In the meantime Don Francis of Salsedo, and other friends to the new establishment, deputed a very pious priest, named Gonzales de Aranda, to go to court to solicit in its favour, and at length all things were successfully concluded by a new brief from Rome, by which the foundation of the house without rents was confirmed, and towards the end of the year 1562 the bishop prevailed with the provincial to send Teresa to this new convent, whither she was followed by four fervent nuns from the old house. One of these was chosen prioress; but the bishop soon after obliged Teresa to take upon herself that charge, and her incomparable prudence in governing others appeared henceforward in her whole conduct. The mortification of the will and senses, and the exercise of assiduous prayer, were made the foundation of her rule: strict inclosure was established, with almost perpetual silence. The most austere poverty was an essential part of the rule, without any settled revenues; the nuns wore habits of coarse serge, and sandals instead of shoes, lay on straw, and never ate flesh. St Teresa admitted to the habit several fervent virgins; but would not have above thirteen nuns in this house, for fear of dangers of relaxations and other inconveniences which are usually very great in numerous houses. In nunneries which should be founded with revenues, and not to subsist solely on alms, she afterwards allowed twenty to be received. But this regulation as to the number is not everywhere

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 33.

observed in this Order. The fervour of these holy nuns was such that the little convent of St Joseph seemed a paradise of angels on earth, everyone in it studying to copy the spirit of the great model before them. The general of the Order, John Baptist Rubeo of Ravenna, who usually resided at Rome, coming into Spain and to Avila in 1566, was infinitely charmed with the conversation and sanctity of the foundress, and with the wise regulations of the house, and he gave St Teresa full authority to found other convents upon the same plan.

Out of an ardent zeal for the conversion of sinners, she asked his leave to establish also some convents of religious men, and the general at first allowed her to erect two. St Teresa passed five years in her convent of St Joseph, with thirteen fervent nuns, whom she discreetly exercised in every sort of mortification, obedience, and all religious exercises, being herself the first and most diligent, not only at prayer, but also in spinning, sweeping the house, or working in the kitchen. Among these holy virgins many were of high birth; but, having renounced the world, they thought of no distinction but that of surpassing each other in humility, penance, and affection for one another and for their holy mother; they abounded with heavenly consolations, and their whole lives were a continued course of penitential exercises and contemplation; they never suffered their prayer to be interrupted night or day as far as the weakness and frailty of our mortal state would admit. For St Teresa declared assiduous prayer, silence, close retirement, and penance to be the four pillars of the spiritual edifice she had raised, and the fundamental constitutions of their state. In August 1567, St Teresa went to Medina del Campo and, having conquered many difficulties, founded there a second convent. In her history of the foundation of this house, she gives her spiritual daughters excellent advice concerning mental prayer, saying that it consists not so much in thinking or forming reflections (of which everyone is not equally capable) as in loving; in resolving to serve God, to suffer for him joyfully, and to do his will; and in asking grace for this. Her instructions concerning obedience are not less important; for it is happy obedience and perfect resignation that give the inestimable treasure of liberty of spirit, by which a soul desires nothing, yet possesses all things; neither fears nor covets the things of this world, and is neither disturbed by crosses nor softened by pleasures. The Countess de la Cerda, whom St Teresa had visited at Toledo, most earnestly desiring to found a convent of this Order at her town of Malagon, the saint and the countess attended that work. Thence St Teresa went to Valladolid, and there founded another nunnery. She was much affected with the virtue and happy death of a young nun in this house, and has given an amiable description of her perfect humility, meekness, patience, obedience, fervour, and perpetual silence and prayer. She never meddled in any matter that concerned her not, and therefore she discerned no defect

in anyone but in herself. In her last sickness she said to her sisters, "We ought not so much as turn our eyes but for the love of God, and to do what is acceptable to him." Another time she said, "It would be a torment to her to take satisfaction in anything that was not God" (or for him). St Teresa made her next foundation at Toledo. She met here with violent opposition and great obstacles, and had no more than four or five ducats when she began the edifice. But she said, "Teresa and this money are indeed nothing; but God, Teresa, and these ducats suffice for the accomplishment of the undertaking."

At Toledo a young woman who had gained a reputation of virtue petitioned to be admitted to the habit, but added, "I will bring with me my Bible." "What!" said the saint, "your Bible? Do not come to us. We are poor women who know nothing but how to spin, and to do what we are bid." By that word she discovered in the postulant an inclination to vanity, and dangerous curiosity and wrangling; and the extravagancies into which that woman afterwards fell justified her discernment and penetration. St Teresa had met with two Carmelite friars at Medina del Campo who were desirous to embrace her reform, F. Antony of Jesus, then prior there, and F. John of the Cross. As soon, therefore, as an opportunity offered itself, she founded a convent for religious men at a poor village called Durvelo in 1568 (of which F. Antony was appointed prior), and in 1569 a second for men at Pastrana, both in extreme poverty and austerity, especially the latter. After these two foundations St Teresa left to St John of the Cross the care of all other foundations that should be made for the religious men. At Pastrana she also established a convent for nuns. Prince Ruy Gomez de Sylva, a favourite courtier of Philip II, who had founded these convents at Pastrana, dying, his princess in the sudden excess of her grief made her religious profession in this nunnery; but when this passion abated claimed many exemptions, and would still maintain the dignity of princess; so that St Teresa, finding she could not be brought to the humility of her profession, lest relaxations should be introduced into her Order, sent a precept to the nuns to leave that house to her, and retire to people a new convent in Segovia. Afterwards she would not easily admit ladies who had been long accustomed to rule. When Bishop Yepez entreated her once to admit to the habit a certain postulant, who was a lady of the first quality, advanced in years, and very rich both in money and vassalages, she would never hear of it, saying that great ladies who have been long accustomed to have their own will seldom sufficiently learn humility, obedience, and simplicity, without which they are more likely to overturn than to support a religious Order.<sup>1</sup> In 1570 St Teresa founded a convent at Salamanca, and another at Alva. Pope Pius V appointed apostolic visitors to inquire into relaxations in religious

<sup>1</sup> Yepez, b. 2, c. 21.

Orders, that they might be reformed. Dr Peter Fernandez, a Dominican friar famous for his virtue and learning, was nominated visitor of the Carmelites in that part of Spain, and in the discharge of his office coming to Avila, he found great fault in the monastery of the Incarnation, in which were fourscore nuns, that inclosure and solitude were not better observed. To remedy these disorders he sent for St Teresa, who had formerly consulted him in her doubts, and commanded her to take upon her the charge of prioress. It was a double affliction to the saint to be separated from her own dear daughters, and to be placed at the head of a house which opposed her reform with jealousy and warmth. The nuns also refused to obey her. She told them that she came not to command or instruct, but to serve and be instructed by the last amongst them. It was her custom to gain the hearts first before she laid her commands; and having by sweetness and humility won the affections of this whole community, she easily re-established discipline, shut up the parlours, and excluded the frequent visits of世俗s. At the end of the three years of her superiority the nuns much desired to detain her, but she was appointed prioress of her reformed convent of St Joseph in the same town. The provincial ejected St John of the Cross and other fathers whom St Teresa had appointed confessors to the house of the Incarnation, and involved her in the persecution he raised against them.

St Teresa felt most severely the persecutions which St John of the Cross, F. Gratian, and others suffered; yet bore everything with admirable patience and resignation, and wrote to the general with perfect submission and wonderful tranquillity and cheerfulness of mind. Bishop Yepez, who was at that time her spiritual director, was amazed at her constant joy, courage, meekness, and invincible greatness of soul under all manner of afflictions and the most atrocious slanders with which even her chastity was attacked. In the meantime she did all the good offices in her power to every one of them that persecuted her, always spoke well of them, and would never hear the least sinister construction put upon any of their actions. She felt only the sufferings of others, being entirely insensible to her own. When FF. Gratian, Marian, and the rest gave up all for lost, she assured them, "We shall suffer, but the Order will stand." The only answer she made to calumnies which were whispered against her was, "If they thoroughly knew me, they would say much worse things of me." She told her persecuted friends that nothing seemed to her a surer mark of the divine mercy toward them, and that nothing is more advantageous or necessary than to suffer, that we may learn better to know both God and ourselves, and be assisted more perfectly to extirpate pride and the love of the world out of our hearts. "I return God a thousand thanks," said she, writing to a friar of her Order, "and you ought also to thank him on my account. What greater pleasure can we enjoy than to suffer for so

good a God! The cross is the secure and beaten road to lead our souls to him. Let us then love and embrace it. Woe to our reform, and woe to every one of us, if crosses fail us."<sup>1</sup> After recommending her undertaking with many tears to God for the honour of his divine name, she wrote to the king, imploring his protection; and his majesty, upon the information of certain Dominican friars of great reputation, warmly espoused her cause and that of her establishments; and an order was obtained at Rome to exempt the Reformed from the jurisdiction of the mitigated Carmelites, so that each should have their own provincials. This expedient satisfied both parties, and put an end to these troubles in 1577.

Though the wonderful success of this saint in her enterprises undertaken for the divine honour was owing to the blessing of God, and to the divine light and assistance which she drew down upon her actions by the spirit of holy prayer, the great channel of grace, she was certainly a person endowed with great natural talents. The most amiable sweetness and meekness of her temper, the affectionate tenderness of her heart, and the liveliness of her wit and imagination, poised with an uncommon maturity of judgment, gained her always in the first part of her life the particular love and esteem of all her acquaintance. Bishop Yepez assures us that her deportment in the latter part of her life was not less agreeable than it was edifying; and that the gravity, modesty, and discretion of her words and carriage had such a dignity and gracefulness, and such charms, that even her looks composed the hearts and regulated the manners of those who conversed with her. He adds that her prudence and address were admirable. Such was her love of simplicity, truth, and sincerity, that if she heard any nun repeat something they had heard with ever so trifling an alteration in a single word, she reprimanded them with extreme severity; and often said that a person could never arrive at perfection who was not a scrupulous lover of candour and truth. This appeared in all her dealings, and she would have rather suffered the most important affairs to miscarry than to have said any word in which there could be the least shadow or danger of a lie or equivocation.<sup>2</sup>

St Teresa lived to see sixteen nunneries of her Reformed Order founded, and fourteen convents of Carmelite friars. St Teresa was returning from founding a convent at Burgos to Avila, where she was prioress, when she was sent for by the Duchess of Alva. She was at that time very ill of her usual distemper of a palsy and frequent violent vomitings. Yet when she arrived at Alva, on the 20th of September, she conversed with the duchess several hours; then went to her convent in the town, understanding that our Lord called her to himself. On the 30th of that month she was seized with a bloody-flux, and after communicating at mass took to her bed and never rose out of it any more. The duchess visited her

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Yepez, par. 2, c. 15.

every day, and would needs serve her with her own hands. Sister Anne of St Bartholomew, the saint's individual companion, never left her. On the 1st of October, having passed almost the whole night in prayer, she made her confession to F. Antony of Jesus. He afterwards, in the presence of the nuns, entreated her to pray that God would not yet take her from them. She answered she was no way needful to them nor useful in the world. She gave every day many wholesome instructions to her nuns with greater energy and tenderness than usual. She besought them for the love of God to observe their rules and constitutions with the utmost diligence, and not to consider the bad example such a sinner had given them, but to forgive her. The holy viaticum being brought into her chamber on the 3rd of October in the evening, she sprung up in her bed, though exceedingly weak, and among other fervent ejaculations, said, "O my Lord and my spouse, the desired hour is now come. It is now time for me to depart hence. Thy will be done. The hour is at last come wherein I shall pass out of this exile, and my soul shall enjoy in thy company what it hath so earnestly longed for." At nine o'clock the same evening she desired and received extreme unction. F. Antony asked her if she would not be buried in her own convent at Avila? To which she answered, "Have I anything mine in this world? Or will they not afford me here a little earth?" She recited often certain verses of the "Miserere" psalm, especially those words, "A contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." This she repeated till her speech failed her. After this she remained fourteen hours, as it were, in a trance, holding a crucifix fast in her hand, and calmly expired at nine o'clock in the evening, on the 4th of October 1582, the next day (by the reformation of the calendar made that year by cutting off those ten days) being reckoned the 15th, the day which was afterwards appointed for her festival. She lived sixty-seven years, six months, and seven days, of which she passed forty-seven in a religious state, and the latter twenty in the observance of her reformed rule.<sup>1</sup> Her body was honourably buried at Alva; but three years after, by a decree of the provincial chapter of the Order, secretly taken up and removed to Avila in 1585. The Duke of Alva, resenting this translation, obtained an order at Rome that the relics should be restored to Alva, which was done in 1586, the body being always found entire, of the same colour, and the joints flexible. There it remains incorrupt to this day. St Teresa was canonized by Gregory XV in 1621. The history of many miracles wrought by her relics and intercession may be seen in Yepez<sup>2</sup> and in the acts of her canonization.

St Teresa having tasted so plentifully the sweetness of divine love, earnestly exhorts all others by penance and holy prayer to aspire to the same. She cries out,<sup>3</sup> "O admirable benignity of thine, O my God, who

<sup>1</sup> Ribera, lib. iii. c. 15; Yepez, lib. ii. c. 38, p. 471. <sup>2</sup> Yepez, lib. iv. <sup>3</sup> Her own life, c. 26

permittest thyself to be looked upon by those eyes which have abused their sight so much as these of my soul have done! O great ingratitude of mortals! O you souls which have true faith, what blessings can you seek which may any way be compared to the least of those which are obtained by the servants of God, even in this mortal life, besides the happy eternity hereafter! Consider it is most true that God even here gives himself to such as forsake all things else for the love of him. He is no excepter of persons; he loves all, nor hath anyone an excuse, how wicked soever he hath been, since our Lord hath dealt with me so mercifully. It is a shame, and I apply it to myself (and if it were possible for souls to be ashamed in heaven, I should be justly ashamed there more than any other), that we should desire such great blessings and infinite glory all at the cost of the good Jesus, and not weep at least over him with the daughters of Jerusalem. If we will not help him to carry the cross, O how can we ever think of coming to enjoy, by the way of pleasures and pastimes, that which he purchased for us at the expense of so much blood! This can never be. We take quite a wrong course; we shall never arrive at our journey's end by such an erroneous way. Your reverence must cry out aloud to make these truths be heard. O how rich will he find himself another day who left all the riches he had for Christ! How full of honour, who rejected all worldly honour, and took pleasure in seeing himself much debased and despised for the love of him! How wise will he see himself then who rejoiced to see the world hold him for a fool, since they called wisdom itself by that name!" &c.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 15:*

VENERABLE ANNE OF ST BARTHOLOMEW: St TECLA, a holy English nun at Wimborne in Dorsetshire who, being invited by St Boniface to Germany, was made Abbess of Kilzingen; she trained young gentlewomen in habits of virtue: St HOSPICRUS, anchorite, in French Hospis, who devoted his life to penance; St Gregory of Tours, his contemporary, relates many predictions and miracles of this great saint: St TERESA, the famous reformer of the Carmelites; on account of her writings she is considered one of the greatest doctors of mystical theology (1582).

## OCTOBER 16

### ST GALL, ABBOT

(A.D. 646)

[From his life compiled by Walfidus Strabo, a monk, first of Fulde, afterwards of St Gall's, who died Abbot of the neighbouring monastery of Richenow, in the diocese of Constance, founded by Charles Martel, in 724. His name is famous for his books on the divine offices; he died about the year 849. Notker, monk of St Gall's, about the year 900, compiled the life of St Gall in verse. See on this saint Mabillon Acta Bened. t. ii. p. 230, and Annal. lib. xi. and xiii.]

AMONG the great number of eminent disciples which St Columban left imitators of his heroic virtues, none seems to have been more famous than St Gall. He was born in Ireland, soon after the middle of the sixth century, of parents who were conspicuous both for their piety and for their riches, and the rank which they held among the nobility. By them he was offered

to God from his birth, and by their care was educated in the great monastery of Benchor, under the direction of the holy abbots St Comgal and St Columban. Studies, especially of sacred learning, flourished in this house; and St Gall was well versed in grammar, poetry, and the holy scriptures. When St Columban left Ireland, St Gall was one of those twelve who accompanied him into England and afterwards into France, where they arrived in 585. They were courteously received by Sigebert, the pious King of Austrasia and Burgundy; and St Columban, assisted by the liberality of that prince, founded the monastery of Anegray in a wild forest, in the diocese of Besançon, and two years afterwards that of Luxeu. St Columban being driven thence by King Theodoric, whom he had reproved for his lust, St Gall shared in his persecution, and both withdrew into the territories of Theodebert, who was then King of Austrasia and reigned at Metz. Villemar, the holy priest of Arben, near the lake of Constance, afforded them a retreat. The servants of God built themselves cells in a desert near Bregenz, converted many idolaters who had a temple near that place, and, in the end of one of their sermons, broke their brazen statues and threw them into the lake. The pagans that remained obstinate persecuted the monks, and slew two of them. Gunzo, governor of the country, also declared himself their enemy, and King Theodoric, by the death of Theodebert, whom he killed in battle, becoming master of Austrasia, St Columban retired into Italy. St Gall was unwilling to be separated from him, but was prevented from bearing him company by a grievous fit of illness. The cells which this saint built there for those who desired to serve God with him he gave to the monastery called of St Gall, the abbot of which is prince of the empire, and an ally of the Switzers. St Gall was a priest before he left Ireland, and having learned the language of the country where he settled, near the lake of Constance, by his preaching, example, and miracles he converted to the faith a great number of idolaters, so as to be justly regarded as the apostle of that territory.

A beautiful daughter of Gunzo, duke or governor of the country, being possessed by the devil, was delivered by the saint, and by his advice chose rather to consecrate her virginity to God in the monastery of St Peter, at Metz, than to marry a son of the King of Austrasia. The Duke Gunzo and a synod of bishops, with the clergy and people, earnestly desired to place the saint in the episcopal see of Constance; but his modesty and fears were not to be overcome. To avert this danger from himself and satisfy the importunity of the people, he proposed to them his deacon and disciple John, who was accordingly elected. On the solemnity of his consecration St Gall preached a sermon, which is published by Canisius,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Canis. Lect. Antiqu. ed. vet. t. v. p. 896—ed. Baspagi, t. i. pp. 785, 792; Bibl. Patr. Lugd. t. xi. p. 1046.*

and in the Library of the Fathers. In it a natural simplicity of style is set off by great penetration, strength, piety, and solid erudition. The author speaks of himself as one taken up in the apostolic labours of the ministry. He only left his cell to preach, and instruct chiefly the wildest and most abandoned among the inhabitants in the mountainous parts of the country; and returning continually to his hermitage, he there often spent whole nights and days in holy prayer and contemplation, in which he usually poured forth his soul before God with floods of tears. Upon the death of St Eustasius, whom St Columban had left abbot of Luxeu, the monks chose St Gall in 625; but that house was then grown rich in lands and possessions; and the humble servant of God understood too well the advantages of the inestimable treasure of holy poverty in a penitential life to suffer himself to be robbed of it. The charge of a numerous community also alarmed him; for he was aware how difficult a matter it is to maintain a true spirit of perfection in multitudes; and the lukewarmness of one monk would have been to him a subject of perpetual trembling, not only for that soul, but also for his own and for the whole community, from the contagion of such an example.

Walfridus Strabo places the death of our saint soon after that of St Eustasius; but Mabillon shows clearly<sup>1</sup> that he lived many years longer, and only died about the year 646, on the 16th of October, the day on which the church honours his memory.

He who desires to preach to others with fruit must first preach to himself, treasuring up lessons of true piety in his own mind, imprinting deeply in his heart the sentiments of all virtues and learning to practise first what he would afterwards teach others. The gift of true spiritual knowledge cannot be obtained but by sincere humility and purity of heart, which is freed from vices and earthly affections, and by holy meditation, which alone can give a heavenly tincture and frame to the mind, as Cassian says.<sup>2</sup> As our food is assimilated to our flesh by digestion, so spiritual affections pass, as it were, into the very substance of our souls by pious meditation and the exercises of holy compunction, divine love, and all other interior virtues, which he will be able to teach others who is possessed of them himself.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 16:*

THE PURITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN: ST GALL, an Irishman educated under St Comgall and St Columban; he came with the latter to England and France, and later retired with him to a place near Lake Constance, where their monastery was called after St Gall, who died there in the early part of the seventh century: ST LULLUS or LULLON, Archbishop of Mentz, an Englishman, probably one of the West Saxons, who pursued his studies under the Venerable Bede; his learning was great and he was consulted on difficult points of doctrine; noted amongst other virtues for "his firm attachment to his friends": ST MUMMOLIN or MOMMOLIN, Bishop of Noyon, governed the extensive see of St Omer for twenty-six years: and ST GERARD MAJELA, born near Naples, 1726; became a Redemptorist lay-brother distinguished by great holiness; canonized by Pope Pius X.

<sup>1</sup> Mab. Annal. Bened. lib. iii. n. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Collat. 14, c. 10.

OCTOBER 17

ST HEDWIGES, OR AVOICE, WIDOW,  
DUCHESS OF POLAND

(A.D. 1243)

[From her exact life extant in Surius, and D'Andilly, *Saints Illustr.* See also Chromer, *Hist. lib. 7, 8.* Dugloss, *Hist. Polonicae, lib. vi. et vii.*, and F. Raderus, *Bavaria Sancta, t. i. p. 147.*]

THE father of this saint was Bertold III of Andechs, Marquis of Meran, Count of Tirol, and Prince (or Duke) of Carinthia and Istria, as he is styled in the Chronicle of Andechs and in the life of St Elizabeth of Hungary.<sup>1</sup> Her mother was Agnes, daughter of the Count of Rotletch. St Hedwiges, by a distinguishing effect of the divine mercy in her favour, was from her cradle formed to virtue by the example and lessons of her devout mother and of those that were placed about her. In her infancy she discovered no marks of levity, and all her inclinations were turned to piety and devotion. She was placed very young in the monastery of Lutzingen, in Franconia, and only taken thence when twelve years old to marry Henry, Duke of Silesia, descended of the Dukes of Glogau, in that country; to which match she only consented out of compliance with the will of her parents. In this state, by the fidelity with which she acquitted herself of all her respective duties towards God, her husband, her children, and her family, she was truly the courageous woman described by the wise man,<sup>2</sup> who is to be sought from the utmost boundaries of the earth; making it her study in all things only to please God, and to sanctify her own soul and her household, she directed all her views and actions to this great end. With her husband's free consent she always passed holydays, fast-days, and all seasons of devotion in continence. She bore her husband three sons, Henry, Conrad, and Boleslas; and three daughters, Agnes, Sophia, and Gertrude. After the birth of her sixth child, she engaged her husband to agree to a mutual vow of perpetual continence, which they made in presence of the bishop of the place; from which time they never met but in public places. Her husband faithfully kept this vow for thirty years that he lived afterwards; during which time he never wore any gold, silver, or purple, and never shaved his beard; from which circumstance he was surnamed Henry the Bearded.

Whether in prosperity or adversity, her whole comfort was in God and in the exercises of religion. The duke, at her persuasion and upon her yielding into his hands her whole dower for this purpose, founded the great monastery of Cistercian nuns at Trebnitz, three miles from Breslau, the capital of Silesia; upon which he settled the town of Trebnitz and other estates, endowing it for the maintenance of one thousand persons,

<sup>1</sup> See Lazius and Raderus, t. iii. *passim.*<sup>2</sup> *Prov. xxx. 10, &c.*

of which, in the first foundation, one hundred were nuns; the rest were young ladies of reduced families, who were to be here educated in piety and afterwards provided with competent portions to marry advantageously in the world; or, if they were inclined to a monastic state, they were at liberty to profess it in this or in any other nunnery. This building was begun in 1203, and was carried on fifteen years without interruption, during which time all malefactors in Silesia, instead of other punishments, were condemned to work at it, and the severity of their servitude was proportioned to their crimes. The monastery was finished and the church dedicated in 1219. The duchess practised in her palace greater austerities than those of the most rigid monks, fasted and watched in prayer, and wherever she travelled had always thirteen poor persons with her, whom she maintained, in honour of Christ and his apostles, waiting upon them herself upon her knees at table, where they were served with good meat before she took her own coarse refection. She often washed the feet and kissed the ulcers of lepers, and having an extreme desire to hear that amiable sentence from Christ at the last day, "I was in prison and you visited me," &c., she exhausted her revenues in relieving the necessitous. The simplicity which she observed in her dress whilst she lived with her husband showed that, if respect to him and his court obliged her to wear decent apparel, she was yet an enemy to vain or gaudy ornaments, which amuse a great part of her sex, and much more to all decorations and artifices of dress with which many ladies study to set themselves off to advantage; a certain mark of vanity, or a pleasure they take in themselves, and a dangerous desire of pleasing others. This passion, which banishes from the breast where it reigns the spirit of Christ and his gospel, cherishes the root of many vices, and without design spreads snares to entangle and destroy unwary souls, cannot find place in one whose conduct is regulated by, and whose heart is penetrated with, the spirit of Christian modesty.

St Hedwiges, after her separation from her husband, carried her love of humility and penance much further in this respect, and wore only clothes of plain grey stuff. Her desire of advancing in perfection put her upon leaving the palace with her husband's consent, and fixing altogether at Trebnitz, near the monastery, often retiring for some days into that austere house, where she lay in the dormitory, and complied with all the penitential exercises of the community. She wore the same cloak and tunic summer and winter; and underneath a rough hair shift, with sleeves of white serge, that it might not be discovered. She fasted every day except Sundays and great festivals, on which she allowed herself two small refections. For forty years she never ate any flesh, though subject to frequent violent illnesses; except that once, under a grievous distemper in Poland, she took a little, in obedience to the precept of the pope's legate. On

Wednesdays and Fridays her refection was only bread and water. With going to churches barefoot, sometimes over ice and snow, her feet were often blistered and left the ground stained with traces of her blood; but she carried shoes under her arms, to put on if she met anyone. Her maids that attended her to church, though well clad, were not able to bear the cold, which she never seemed to feel. She had a good bed in her chamber, but never made use of it, taking her rest on the bare ground; she watched great part of the night in prayer and tears, and never returned to rest after matins. After compline she prolonged her prayers in the church till very late: and from matins till break of day. At her work, or other employments, she never ceased to sigh to God in her heart as a stranger banished from him on earth, and returned often in the day to the church, where she usually retired into a secret corner, that her tears might not be perceived. The Princess Anne, her daughter-in-law, who usually knelt next to her, admired the abundance of tears she saw her frequently shed at her devotions, the interior joy and delights with which she was often overwhelmed during her communications with heaven, and the sublime raptures with which she was sometimes favoured. The same was testified by Herbold, her confessor, and by several servant maids. At her prayers she frequently kissed the ground, watering it with her tears, and in private often prayed a long time together prostrate on the floor. She continued in prayer during all the time it thundered, remembering the terrors of the last day. Her tears and devotion were extraordinary when she approached the holy communion. She always heard mass either kneeling or prostrate, with a devotion which astonished all that saw her; nor could she be satisfied without hearing every morning all the masses that were said in the church where she was.

That devotion is false or imperfect which is not founded in humility and the subjection of the passions. St Hedwiges always sincerely looked upon herself as the last and most ungrateful to God of all creatures, and she was often seen to kiss the ground where some virtuous person had knelt in the church. No provocation was observed to make her ever show the least sign of emotion or anger. Whilst she lived in the world, the manner in which she reprimanded servants for faults showed how perfectly she was mistress of herself, and how unalterable the peace of her mind was. This also appeared in the heroic constancy with which she bore afflictions. Upon receiving the news of her husband being wounded in battle and taken prisoner by the Duke of Kirne, she said, without the least disturbance of mind, that she hoped to see him in a short time at liberty and in good health. The conqueror rejected all terms that could be offered for his freedom; which obliged Henry, our saint's eldest son, to raise a powerful army to attempt his father's rescue by force of arms. Hedwiges, whose tender soul could never hear of the effusion of Christian blood without

doing all in her power to prevent it, went in person to Conrad, and the very sight of her disarmed him of all his rage, so that she easily obtained what she demanded. The example of our saint had so powerful an influence over her husband that he not only allowed her an entire liberty as to her manner of living and exercises of piety, but began at length in some degree to copy her virtues; observed the modesty and recollection of a monk in the midst of a court; and became the father of his people and the support of the poor and weak. All his thoughts were directed to administering justice to his subjects, and making piety and religion flourish in his dominions. He died happily in 1238, upon which melancholy occasion all the nuns at Trebnitz expressed their sense of so great a loss by many tears and other marks of grief. From that time she put on the religious habit at Trebnitz, and lived in obedience to her daughter Gertrude, who, having made her religious profession in that house when it was first founded, had been before that time chosen abbess. Nevertheless, St Hedwiges never made any monastic vows, that she might continue to succour the necessitous by her bountiful charities.

One instance will suffice to show with what humility and meekness she conversed with her religious sisters. Out of a spirit of sincere poverty and humility, she never wore any other than some old threadbare castaway habit. One of the nuns happened once to say to her, "Why do you wear these tattered rags? They ought rather to be given to the poor." The saint meekly answered, "If this habit gives any offence, I am ready to correct my fault." And she instantly laid it aside and got another, though she would not have a new one. Three years after the death of her husband, she sustained a grievous trial in the loss of her eldest, most virtuous, and most beloved son Henry, surnamed the Pious, who had succeeded his father in the duchies both of Greater and Lesser Poland and of Silesia. The Tartars, with a numberless army, poured out of Asia by the north, proposing nothing less to themselves than to swallow up all Europe. Having plundered all the country that lay in their way through Russia and Bulgaria, they arrived at Cracow, in Poland. Finding that city abandoned by its inhabitants, who carried off their treasures, they burnt it to the ground, so that nothing was left standing except the Church of St Andrew, without the walls. Continuing their march into Silesia, they laid siege to the citadel of Breslau, which was protected by the prayers of St Ceslas, or Cieslas, prior of the Dominicans there, and the barbarians, terrified by a globe of fire which fell from the heavens upon their camp, retired towards Legnitz. Duke Henry assembled his forces at Legnitz, and, every soldier having been at confession, he caused mass to be said, at which he and all his army received the holy communion.<sup>1</sup> From this sacred action he courageously led his little army to fall upon the enemy,

<sup>1</sup> Chromer, lib. vi. ; Dlugoss, lib. vii. ad an. 1241. p. 677.

having with him Miceslas, Duke of Oppolen in Higher Silesia, Boleslas, Marquis of Monravia, and other princes. He gave wonderful proofs both of his courage and conduct in this memorable battle, and for some time drove the barbarians before him; but at last, his horse being killed under him, he was himself slain not far from Legnitz, in 1241. His corpse was carried to the Princess Anne, his wife, and by her sent to Breslau, to be interred in the convent of Franciscans which he had begun to found there, and which she finished after his death. The grandchildren of our saint were preserved from the swords of these infidels, being shut up in the impregnable castle of Legnitz. St Hedwiges herself had retired, with her nuns and her daughter-in-law, Anne, to the fortress of Chrosne. Upon the news of this disaster she comforted her daughter the abbess, and her daughter-in-law the princess, who seemed almost dead with grief. Without letting fall a single tear, or discovering the least trouble of mind, she said, "God hath disposed of my son as it hath pleased him. We ought to have no other will than his." Then, lifting up her eyes to heaven, she prayed as follows: "I thank you, my God, for having given me such a son, who always loved and honoured me, and never gave me the least occasion of displeasure. To see him alive was my great joy; yet I feel a still greater pleasure in seeing him, by such a death, deserve to be for ever united to you in the kingdom of your glory. Oh, my God, with my whole heart I commend to you his dear soul." The example of this saint's lively faith and hope most powerfully and sweetly dispelled the grief of those that were in affliction, and her whole conduct was the strongest exhortation to every virtue. This gave an irresistible force to the holy advice she sometimes gave others. Being a true and faithful lover of the cross, she was wont to exhort all with whom she conversed to arm themselves against the prosperity of the world with still more diligence than against its adversities, the former being fraught with more snares and greater dangers. Nothing seemed to surpass the lessons on humility which she gave to her daughter-in-law Anne, which were the dictates of her own feeling and experimental sentiments of that virtue. Her humility was honoured by God with the gift of miracles. A nun of Trebnitz who was blind recovered her sight by the blessing of the saint with the sign of the cross. In her last sickness she insisted on receiving extreme unction before any others could be persuaded that she was in danger. The passion of Christ, which she had always made a principal part of her most tender devotion, was the chief entertainment by which she prepared herself for her last passage. God was pleased to put a happy end to her labours by calling her to himself on the 15th of October 1243. Her mortal remains were deposited at Trebnitz. She was canonized in 1266 by Clement IV, and her relics were enshrined the year following.<sup>1</sup> Pope

<sup>1</sup> Dlugoss, Hist. Polon. lib. vii. pp. 781, 783, t. i.

Innocent XI appointed the 17th of this month for the celebration of her office.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 17:*

ST ANDREW OF CRETE, a zealous defender of holy images in the reign of Constantine Copronimus, by whose orders he was whipped to death in the circus of St Mamas, without the walls of Constantinople, on this date, 761: ST ANSTRUDIS, commonly called ANSTRU, Abbess: ST HEDWIGES, widow, Duchess of Poland, entered a Cistercian nunnery after the death of her husband; she practised the greatest austerities and died in 1243: ST MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE, 1647-1690, whom our Lord commanded to make known devotion to His Sacred Heart; canonized by Benedict XV, 1920: BLESSED NOËL PINOT (1747-1794), priest, one of the martyrs of the French Revolution; he went to the guillotine on the day he was sentenced dressed in his sacerdotal garments; beatified by Pius XI, 1926: and the BLESSED URSULINE MARTYRS OF VALENCIENNES, five of whom were arraigned on this date in 1794.

## OCTOBER 18

### ST LUKE THE EVANGELIST

[See Tillem. t. ii. p. 148; Calmet, t. vi. p. 378. Six different Greek histories of St Luke's Acts are extant, all modern, and of no account. See Jos. Assemani, in Calend. Univ. t. v. p. 308.]

THE great apostle of the Gentiles, or rather the Holy Ghost by his pen, is the panegyrist of this glorious evangelist, and his own inspired writings are the highest standing and most authentic commendation of his sanctity, and of those eminent graces which are a just subject of our admiration, but which human praises can only extenuate. St Luke was a native of Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, a city famous for the agreeableness of its situation, the riches of its traffic, its extent, the number of its inhabitants, the politeness of their manners, and their learning and wisdom. Its schools were the most renowned in all Asia, and produced the ablest masters in all arts and sciences. St Luke acquired a stock of learning in his younger years, which we are told he improved by his travels in some parts of Greece and Egypt. St Jerom assures us he was very eminent in his profession, and St Paul, by calling him his most dear physician,<sup>1</sup> seems to indicate that he had not laid it aside. Besides his abilities in physic, he is said to have been very skilful in painting. The Menology of the Emperor Basil, compiled in 980, Nicephorus,<sup>2</sup> Metaphrastes, and other modern Greeks quoted by F. Gretzer in his dissertation on this subject, speak much of his excelling in this art, and of his leaving many pictures of Christ and the Blessed Virgin. Though neither the antiquity nor the credit of these authors is of great weight, it must be acknowledged, with a very judicious critic, that some curious anecdotes are found in their writings. In this particular, what they tell us is supported by the authority of Theodorus Lector, who lived in 518, and relates<sup>3</sup> that a picture of the Blessed Virgin painted by St Luke was sent from Jerusalem to the Empress Pulcheria, who placed it in the church of Hodegorum which she built in her honour at Constantinople. Moreover, a very ancient inscription was found in a vault near the Church of St Mary *in via lati* in Rome, in which it is said of a picture of the

<sup>1</sup> Coloss. i. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. ii. c. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Lib. i. pp. 551, 552.

Blessed Virgin Mary discovered there, "One of the seven painted by St Luke." Three or four such pictures are still in being; the principal is that placed by Paul V in the Barghesian chapel in St Mary Major.

St Luke was a proselyte to the Christian religion, but whether from Paganism or rather from Judaism is uncertain; for many Jews were settled in Antioch, but chiefly such as were called Hellenists, who read the Bible in the Greek translation of the Septuagint. St Jerom observes from his writings that he was more skilled in Greek than in Hebrew, and that therefore he not only always makes use of the Septuagint translation, as the other authors of the New Testament who wrote in Greek do, but he refrains sometimes from translating words when the propriety of the Greek tongue would not bear it. Some think he was converted to the faith by St Paul at Antioch; others judge this improbable, because that apostle nowhere calls him his son, as he frequently does his converts. St Epiphanius makes him to have been a disciple of our Lord; which might be for some short time before the death of Christ, though this evangelist says he wrote his gospel from the relations of those "who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, from these words many conclude that he became a Christian at Antioch only after Christ's ascension. Tertullian positively affirms that he never was a disciple of Christ whilst he lived on earth.<sup>2</sup> No sooner was he enlightened by the Holy Ghost and initiated in the school of Christ but he set himself heartily to learn the spirit of his faith and to practise its lessons. For this purpose he studied perfectly to die to himself, and, as the church says of him, "He always carried about in his body the mortification of the cross for the honour of the divine name." He was already a great proficient in the habits of a perfect mastery of himself, and of all virtues, when he became St Paul's companion in his travels and fellow-labourer in the ministry of the gospel. The first time that in his history of the missions of St Paul<sup>3</sup> he speaks in his own name in the first person is when that apostle sailed from Troas into Macedon in the year 51, soon after St Barnabas had left him, and St Irenæus begins from that time the voyages which St Luke made with St Paul.<sup>4</sup> Before this he had doubtless been for some time an assiduous disciple of that great apostle; but from this time he seems never to have left him unless by his order upon commissions for the service of the churches he had planted. It was the height of his ambition to share with that great apostle all his toils, fatigues, dangers, and sufferings. In his company he made some stay at Philippi in Macedon; then he travelled with him through all the cities of Greece, where the harvest every day grew upon their hands. St Paul mentions him more than once as the companion of his travels; he calls him "Luke the beloved physician,"<sup>5</sup> his "fellow

<sup>1</sup> Luke i. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. iv. contr. Marcion, c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xvi. 8, 9, 10.

<sup>4</sup> St Iren. lib. iii. c. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Col. iv. 14.

labourer.”<sup>1</sup> Interpreters usually take Lucius, whom St Paul calls his kinsman,<sup>2</sup> to be St Luke, as the same apostle sometimes gives a Latin termination to Silas, calling him Sylvanus. Many with Origen, Eusebius, and St Jerom say that when St Paul speaks of his own gospel<sup>3</sup> he means that of St Luke, though the passage may be understood simply of the gospel which St Paul preached. He wrote this epistle in the year 57, four years before his first arrival at Rome.

St Luke mainly insists in his gospel upon what relates to Christ’s priestly office; for which reason the ancients, in accommodating the four symbolical representations, mentioned in Ezekiel, to the four evangelists, assigned the ox or calf as an emblem of sacrifices to St Luke. It is only in the Gospel of St Luke that we have a full account of several particulars relating to the Annunciation of the mystery of the Incarnation to the Blessed Virgin, her visit to St Elizabeth, the parable of the prodigal son, and many other most remarkable points. The whole is written with great variety, elegance, and perspicuity. An incomparable sublimity of thought and diction is accompanied with that genuine simplicity which is the characteristic of the sacred penman; and by which the divine actions and doctrine of our Blessed Redeemer are set off in a manner which in every word conveys his holy spirit, and unfolds in every tittle the hidden mysteries and inexhausted riches of the divine love and of all virtues to those who, with a humble and teachable disposition of mind, make these sacred oracles the subject of their assiduous devout meditation. The dignity with which the most sublime mysteries, which transcend all the power of words and even the conception and comprehension of all created beings, are set off without any pomp of expression has in it something divine; and the energy with which the patience, meekness, charity, and beneficence of a God made man for us are described, his divine lessons laid down, and the narrative of his life given, but especially the dispassionate manner in which his adorable sufferings and death are related, without the least exclamation or bestowing the least harsh epithet on his enemies, is a grander and more noble eloquence on such a theme, and a more affecting and tender manner of writing, than the highest strains or the finest ornaments of speech could be. This simplicity makes the great actions speak themselves, which all borrowed eloquence must extenuate. The sacred penmen in these writings were only the instruments or organs of the Holy Ghost; but their style alone suffices to evince how perfectly free their souls were from the reign or influence of human passions, and in how perfect a degree they were replenished with all those divine virtues and that heavenly spirit which their words breathe.

About the year 56 St Paul sent St Luke with St Titus to Corinth with this high commendation, that his praise in the gospel resounded

<sup>1</sup> Philem. v. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xvi. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. ii. 19.

throughout all the churches. St Luke attended him to Rome, whither he was sent prisoner from Jerusalem in 61. The apostle remained there two years in chains; but was permitted to live in a house which he hired, though under the custody of a constant guard; and there he preached to those who daily resorted to hear him. St Luke was the apostle's faithful assistant and attendant during his confinement, and had the comfort to see him set at liberty in 63, the year in which this evangelist finished his *Acts of the Apostles*. This sacred history he compiled at Rome,<sup>1</sup> by divine inspiration, as an appendix to his gospel, to prevent the false relations of those transactions which some published, and to leave an authentic account of the wonderful works of God in planting his church, and some of the miracles by which he confirmed it, and which were an invincible proof of the truth of Christ's resurrection and of his holy religion. Having in the first twelve chapters related the chief general transactions of the principal apostles in the first establishment of the church, beginning at our Lord's ascension, he from the thirteenth chapter almost confines himself to the actions and miracles of St Paul, to most of which he had been privy and an eye-witness, and concerning which false reports were spread.

St Luke did not forsake his master after he was released from his confinement. That apostle in his last imprisonment at Rome writes that the rest had all left him, and that St Luke alone was with him.<sup>2</sup> St Epiphanius says<sup>3</sup> that after the martyrdom of St Paul, St Luke preached in Italy, Gaul, Dalmatia, and Macedon. By Gaul some understand Cisalpine Gaul, others Galatia. Fortunatus and Metaphrastus say he passed into Egypt and preached in Thebais. Nicephorus says he died at Thebes in Bœotia, and that his tomb was shown near that place in his time; but seems to confound the evangelist with St Luke Stiriote, a hermit of that country. St Hippolytus says<sup>4</sup> St Luke was crucified at Elæa in Peloponnesus near Achaia. The modern Greeks tell us he was crucified on an olive tree. The ancient African Martyrology of the fifth age<sup>5</sup> gives him the titles of Evangelist and Martyr. St Gregory Nazianzen,<sup>6</sup> St Paulinus,<sup>7</sup> and St Gaudentius of Brescia<sup>8</sup> assure us that he went to God by martyrdom. Bede, Ado, Usuard, and Baronius in the Martyrologies only say he suffered much for the faith, and died very old in Bithynia. That he crossed the straits to preach in Bithynia is most probable, but then he returned and finished his course in Achaia; under which name Peloponnesus was then comprised. The modern Greeks say he lived fourscore and four years; which assertion has crept into St Jerom's account of St Luke,<sup>9</sup> but is expunged by Martianay, who found those words wanting in all old manuscripts. The bones of St Luke were translated from Patras in Achaia

<sup>1</sup> St Hieron. Catal. Vir. Illustr. c. 7.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 11.

<sup>3</sup> St Epiph. haer. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Hippolytus in MS. Bodleianæ Bibl. ap. Milles in Praef. in Luc. p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> Mabil. Ann. t. iii. p. 414.

<sup>6</sup> Naz. or. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Paulin. Ep. 12, p. 155.

<sup>8</sup> St Gaud. Serm. 17.

<sup>9</sup> De Vir. Illustr. c. 7.

in 357 by order of the Emperor Constantius, and deposited in the Church of the Apostles at Constantinople,<sup>1</sup> together with those of St Andrew and St Timothy. On the occasion of this translation some distribution was made of the relics of St Luke; St Gaudentius procured a part for his church at Brescia.<sup>2</sup> St Paulinus possessed a portion in St Felix's Church at Nola, and with a part enriched a church which he built at Fondi.<sup>3</sup> The magnificent Church of the Apostles at Constantinople was built by Constantine the Great,<sup>4</sup> whose body was deposited in the porch in a chest of gold, the twelve apostles standing round his tomb.<sup>5</sup> When this church was repaired by an order of Justinian, the masons found three wooden chests or coffins in which, as the inscriptions proved, the bodies of St Luke, St Andrew, and St Timothy were interred.<sup>6</sup> Baronius mentions that the head of St Luke was brought by St Gregory from Constantinople to Rome, and laid in the church of his monastery of St Andrew.<sup>7</sup> Some of his relics are kept in the great Grecian monastery on Mount Athos in Greece.<sup>8</sup>

Christ, our divine Legislator, came not only to be our model by his example, and our Redeemer by the sacrifice of his adorable blood, but also to be our doctor and teacher by his heavenly doctrine. With what earnestness and diligence, with what awful respect, ought we to listen to and assiduously meditate upon his divine lessons, which we read in his gospels or hear from the mouths of his ministers who announce to us his word and in his name, or by his authority and commission. It is by repeated meditation that the divine word sinks deep into our hearts. What fatigues and sufferings did it cost the Son of God to announce it to us? How many prophets, how many apostles, evangelists, and holy ministers has he sent to preach the same for the sake of our souls? How intolerable is our contempt of it? our sloth and carelessness in receiving it?

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 18:*

ST JULIAN, hermit, called SABAS for his wisdom and prudence; he sanctified his soul by penance, labour and prayer; foretold the death of Julian the Apostate; St Chrysostom calls him a wonderful man: ST JUSTIN or JUSTUS, martyred four leagues from Paris towards Senlis; he would not betray to the persecutors his father and brother who travelled with him and who had concealed themselves; many others received the crown of martyrdom at the same time at Triers, Amiens, Soissons and Tournay: ST LUKE THE EVANGELIST: ST MONON, martyr, a native of Scotland who led a holy life in the Forest of Ardennes in the seventh century; killed in his cell by robbers, his tomb was made famous by many miracles; a church near St Andrews in Scotland is called Monon's Kirk in his honour.

<sup>1</sup> St Hieron. Ib. Philostorg. Idat. in Chron. Theodor Lector, p. 567.

<sup>2</sup> Serm. 17.

<sup>3</sup> St Paulin. Ep. 24 et 12.

<sup>4</sup> Eus. Vit. Constant. lib. iv. c. 58.

<sup>5</sup> Socrates, Hist. Eccl.

<sup>6</sup> See Procop. de Edif. Justiniani; also Mr Ball, *On the Antiquities of Constantinople*, App. to Gylius, p. 45.

<sup>7</sup> Baron. ad an. 586, n. 25.

<sup>8</sup> *Palæographia Graeca*, lib. vii. p. 456.

OCTOBER 19

ST PETER OF ALCANTARA, CONFESSOR  
(A.D. 1562)

[From his life written by F. John of St Mary, in 1619; and again by F. Martin of St Joseph, in 1644; also from the edifying account St Teresa has left us of him in her own life, c. 27. F. Wadding's Annals of the Franciscan Order, and Helyot, Hist. des Ord. Relig. t. vii. p. 137.]

ST PETER was born at Alcantara, a small town in the province of Estramadura, in Spain, in 1499. His father, Alphonso Garavito, was a lawyer and governor of that town; his mother was of good extraction, and both were persons eminent for their piety and personal merit in the world. Upon the first dawn of reason Peter discovered the most happy dispositions to virtue, and seemed a miracle of his age in fervour and unwearied constancy in the great duty of prayer from his childhood and his very infancy. He had not finished his philosophy in his own country when his father died. Some time after this loss he was sent to Salamanca to study the canon law. During the two years that he spent in that university he divided his whole time between the church, the hospital, the school, and his closet. In 1513 he was recalled to Alcantara, where he deliberated with himself about the choice of a state of life. On one side the devil represented to him the fortune and career which were open to him in the world; on the other side, listening to the suggestions of divine grace, he considered the dangers of such a course, and the happiness and spiritual advantages of holy retirement. These sunk deep into his heart, and he felt in his soul a strong call to a religious state of life, in which he should have no other concern but that of securing his own salvation. Resolving, therefore, to embrace the holy Order of St Francis, in the sixteenth year of his age he took the habit of that austere rule in the solitary convent of Manjarez, situated in the mountains which run between Castile and Portugal. An ardent spirit of penance determined his choice of this rigorous institute in imitation of the Baptist.

During his novitiate he laboured to subdue his domestic enemy by the greatest humiliations, most rigorous fasts, incredible watchings, and other severities. Such was his fervour that the most painful austerities had nothing frightful or difficult for him; his disengagement from the world, from the very moment he renounced it, was so entire that he seemed in his heart to be not only dead or insensible, but even crucified to it, and to find all that a pain which flatters the senses and the vanity of men in it; and the union of his soul with his Creator seemed to suffer no interruption from any external employments. He had first the care of the vestry (which employment was most agreeable to his devotion), then of the gate, and afterwards of the cellar; all which offices he discharged with uncommon exactness, and without prejudice to his recollection. That his eyes and

other senses might be more easily kept under the government of reason, and that they might not, by superfluous curiosity, break in upon the interior recollection of his mind, such was the restraint he put upon them that he had been a considerable time a religious man without ever knowing that the church of his convent was vaulted. After having had the care of serving the refectory for half a year, he was chid by the superior for having never given the friars any of the fruit in his custody; to which the servant of God humbly answered he had never seen any. The truth was he had never lifted up his eyes to the ceiling where the fruit was hanging upon twigs, as is usual in countries where grapes are dried and preserved. He lived four years in a convent without taking notice of a tree that grew near the door. He ate constantly for three years in the same refectory without seeing any other part of it than a part of the table where he sat, and the ground on which he trod. He told St Teresa that he once lived in a house three years without knowing any of his religious brethren but by their voices. From the time that he put on the religious habit to his death he never looked any woman in the face. These were the marks of a true religious man, who studied perfectly to die to himself. His food was for many years only bread moistened in water, or unsavoury herbs, of which, when he lived a hermit, he boiled a considerable quantity together that he might spend the less time in serving his body, and ate them cold, taking a little at once for his refection, which for a considerable time he made only once in three days. Besides these unsavoury herbs he sometimes allowed himself a porridge made with salt and vinegar; but this only on great feasts. For some time his ordinary mess was a soup made of beans; his drink was a small quantity of water. He seemed, by long habits of mortification, to have almost lost the sense of taste in what he ate; for when a little vinegar and salt was thrown into a porringer of warm water he took it for his usual soup of beans. He had no other bed than a rough skin laid on the floor, on which he knelt great part of the night, leaning sometimes on his heels for a little rest; but he slept sitting, leaning his head against a wall. His watchings were the most difficult and the most incredible of all the austerities which he practised; to which he inured himself gradually, that they might not be prejudicial to his health; and which, being of a robust constitution of body, he found himself able to bear. He was assailed by violent temptations and cruel spiritual enemies; but, by the succour of divine grace, and the arms of humility and prayer, was always victorious.

A few months after his profession, Peter was sent from Manjarez to a remote retired convent near Belviso, where he built himself a cell with mud and the branches of trees, at some distance from the rest, in which he practised extraordinary mortifications without being seen. About three years after, he was sent by his provincial to Badajos, the metropolis

of Estramadura, to be superior of a small friary lately established there, though he was at that time but twenty years old. The three years of his guardianship, or wardenship, appeared to him a grievous slavery. When they were elapsed he received his provincial's command to prepare himself for holy orders. Though he earnestly begged for a longer delay, he was obliged to acquiesce, and was promoted to the priesthood in 1524, and soon after employed in preaching. The ensuing year he was made guardian of Placentia. In all stations of superiority he considered himself as a servant to his whole community, and looked upon his post only as a strict obligation of encouraging the rest in the practice of penance by his own example.

The love of retirement being always St Peter's predominant inclination, he made it his earnest petition to his superiors that he might be placed in some remote solitary convent, where he might give himself up to the sweet commerce of divine contemplation. In compliance with his request he was sent to the convent of St Onuphrius, at Lapa, near Soriana, situated in a frightful solitude; but, at the same time, he was commanded to take upon him the charge of guardian, or warden, of that house. In that retirement he composed his golden book on Mental Prayer, at the request of a pious gentleman who had often heard him speak on that subject. This excellent little treatise was justly esteemed a finished masterpiece on this important subject by St Teresa, Lewis of Granada, St Francis of Sales, Pope Gregory XV, Queen Christina of Sweden, and others. Our saint has left us another short treatise, *On the Peace of the Soul*, or *On an Interior Life*, no less excellent than the former. St Peter was himself an excellent proficient in the school of divine love and in the exercises of heavenly contemplation. His prayer and his union with God was habitual. He said mass with a devotion that astonished others, and often with torrents of tears or with raptures. He was seen to remain in prayer a whole hour, with his arms stretched out and his eyes lifted up without moving. His ecstasies in prayer were frequent and sometimes of long continuance. So great was his devotion to the mystery of the incarnation and the holy sacrament of the altar that the very mention or thought of them frequently sufficed to throw him in a rapture. In the jubilation of his soul, through the impetuosity of the divine love, he sometimes was not able to contain himself from singing the divine praises aloud in a wonderful manner. To do this more freely he sometimes went into the woods, where the peasants who heard him sing took him for one who was beside himself.

The reputation of St Peter having reached the ears of John III, King of Portugal, that prince was desirous to consult him upon certain difficulties of conscience, and St Peter received an order from his provincial to repair to him at Lisbon. He did not make use of the carriages which the king had ordered to be ready for him, but made the journey barefoot, without sandals, according to his custom. King John was so well satisfied with

his answers and advice, and so much edified by his saintly comportment, that he engaged him to return again soon after. But though they had fitted up apartments like a cell, with an oratory for him, and allowed him liberty to give himself up wholly to divine contemplation, according to his desire, yet he found the conveniences too great and the palace not agreeable to his purposes. A great division having happened among the townsmen of Alcantara, he took this opportunity to leave the court in order to reconcile those that were at variance. His presence and pathetic discourses easily restored peace among the inhabitants of Alcantara. This affair was scarcely finished when, in 1538, he was chosen provincial of the province of St Gabriel, or of Estramadura, which, though it was of the conventionals, had adopted some time before certain constitutions of a reform. The age required for this office being forty years, the saint warmly urged that he was only thirty-nine; but all were persuaded that his prudence and virtue were an overbalance. Whilst he discharged this office he drew up several severe rules of reformation, which he prevailed on the whole province to accept in a chapter which he held at Placentia for this purpose in 1540.

In 1544 our saint was recalled by his own superiors into Spain, and received by his brethren in the province of Estramadura with the greatest joy. that can be expressed. Heavenly contemplation being always his favourite inclination, though, by obedience, he often employed himself in the service of several churches and in the direction of devout persons, he procured his superior's leave to reside in the most solitary convents, chiefly at St Onuphrius's, near Soriano. After four years spent in this manner, he was allowed, at the request of Prince Lewis, the king's most pious brother, and of the Duke of Aveiro, to return to Portugal. During three years that he stayed in that kingdom he raised his congregation of Arâbida to the most flourishing condition, and in 1550 founded a new convent near Lisbon. This custody was erected into a province of the Order in 1560. His reputation for sanctity drew so many eyes on him, and gave so much interruption to his retirement, that he hastened back to Spain, hoping there to hide himself in some solitude. Upon his arrival at Placentia, in 1551, his brethren earnestly desired to choose him provincial; but the saint turned himself into every shape to obtain the liberty of living some time to himself, and at length prevailed. In 1553 he was appointed custos by a general chapter held at Salamanca. In 1554 he formed a design of establishing a reformed congregation of friars upon a stricter plan than before; for which he procured himself to be empowered by a brief obtained of Pope Julius III. His project was approved by the provincial of Estramadura and by the Bishop of Coria, in whose diocese the saint, with one fervent companion, made an essay of this manner of living in a small hermitage. A short time after, he went to Rome and obtained a second brief, by which he was authorized to build a convent according to this plan.

At his return a friend founded a convent for him, such a one as he desired, near Pedroso, in the diocese of Palentia, in 1555, which is the date of this reformed institute of Franciscans, called The Barefooted, or of the strictest observance of St Peter of Alcantara. This convent was but thirty-two feet long and twenty-eight wide; the cells were exceeding small, and one-half of each was filled with a bed consisting of three boards: the saint's cell was the smallest and most inconvenient. The church was comprised in the dimensions given above, and of a piece with the rest. It was impossible for persons to forget their engagement in a penitential life whilst their habitations seemed rather to resemble graves than chambers. The Count of Oropeza founded upon his estates two other convents for the saint; and certain other houses received his reformation and others were built by him. In 1561 he formed them into a province and drew up certain statutes, in which he orders that each cell should only be seven feet long, the infirmary thirteen, and the church twenty-four; the whole circumference of a convent forty or fifty feet; that the number of friars in a convent should never exceed eight; that they should always go barefoot, without socks or sandals; should lie on the boards, or mats laid on the floor; or, if the place was low and damp, on beds raised one foot from the ground; that none, except in sickness, should ever eat any flesh, fish, or eggs, or drink wine; that they should employ three hours every day in mental prayer, and should never receive any retribution for saying mass. The general appointed St Peter commissary of his Order in Spain in 1556, and he was confirmed in that office by Pope Paul IV in 1559. In 1561, whilst he was commissary, he was chosen provincial of his reformed Order and, going to Rome, begged a confirmation of this institute. Pius IV, who then sat in St Peter's chair, by a bull dated in February 1562, exempted this congregation from all jurisdiction of the conventional Franciscans (under whom St Peter had lived), and subjected it to the minister-general of the Observantins, with this clause, that it is to be maintained in the perpetual observance of the rules and statutes prescribed by St Peter. It is propagated into several provinces in Spain, and is spread into Italy, each province in this reform consisting of about ten religious houses.

When the Emperor Charles V, after resigning his dominions, retired to the monastery of St Justus, in Estramadura, of the Order of Hieronymites in 1555, he made choice of St Peter for his confessor, to assist him in his preparation for death; but the saint, foreseeing that such a situation would be incompatible with the exercises of assiduous contemplation and penance to which he had devoted himself, declined that post with so much earnestness that the emperor was at length obliged to admit his excuses. The saint, whilst in quality of commissary he made the visitation of several monasteries of his Order, arrived at Avila in 1559. St Teresa laboured at that time under the most severe persecutions from her friends and her

very confessors, and under interior trials from scruples and anxiety, fearing at certain intervals, as many told her, that she might be deluded by an evil spirit. A certain pious widow lady, named Guiomera d'Ulloa, an intimate friend of St Teresa, and privy to her troubles and afflictions, got leave of the provincial of the Carmelites that she might pass eight days in her house, and contrived that this great servant of God should there treat with her at leisure. St Peter, from his own experience and knowledge in heavenly communications and raptures, easily understood her, cleared all her perplexities, gave her the strongest assurances that her visions and prayer were from God, loudly confuted her calumniators, and spoke to her confessor in her favour.<sup>1</sup> He afterwards exceedingly encouraged her in establishing her reformation of the Carmelite Order, and especially in founding it in the strictest poverty.<sup>2</sup> Out of his great affection and compassion for her under her sufferings, he told her in confidence many things concerning the rigorous course of penance in which he had lived for seven-and-forty years. "He told me," says she, "that, to the best of my remembrance, he had slept but one hour and a half in twenty-four hours for forty years together; and that, in the beginning, it was the greatest and most troublesome mortification of all to overcome himself in point of sleep; and that in order for this, he was obliged to be always either kneeling or standing on his feet: only when he slept he sat with his head leaning aside upon a little piece of wood fastened for that purpose in the wall. As to the extending his body at length in his cell, it was impossible for him, his cell not being above four feet and a half in length. In all these years he never put on his capouch or hood, how hot soever the sun, or how violent soever the rain might be; nor did he ever wear anything upon his feet, nor any other garment than his habit of thick coarse sack-cloth (without any other thing next his skin), and this short and scanty and as straight as possible, with a short mantle or cloak of the same over it. He told me that when the weather was extreme cold he was wont to put off his mantle and to leave the door and the little window of his cell open, that when he put his mantle on again and shut his door his body might be somewhat refreshed with this additional warmth. It was usual with him to eat but once in three days; and he asked me why I wondered at it, for it was very possible to one who had accustomed himself to it. One of his companions told me that sometimes he ate nothing at all for eight days; but that perhaps might be when he was in prayer; for he used to have great raptures and vehement transports of divine love, of which I was once an eye-witness. His poverty was extreme, and so also was his mortification even from his youth. He told me he had lived three years in a house of his Order without knowing any of the friars but by their speech, for he never lifted up his eyes; so that he did not know

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. c. 35; Foandat. c. 5.

which way to go to many places which he often frequented if he did not follow the other friars. This likewise happened to him in the roads. When I came to know him he was very old, and his body so extenuated and weak that it seemed not to be composed, but as it were of the roots of trees, and was so parched up that his skin resembled more the dried bark of a tree than flesh. He was very affable, but spoke little unless some questions were asked him; and he answered in few words, but in these he was agreeable, for he had an excellent understanding." St Teresa observes, that though a person cannot perform such severe penance as this servant of God did, yet there are many other ways whereby we may tread the world under our feet; and our Lord will teach us these ways when he finds a mind that is fit. To deny the obligation and necessity of some degree of exterior penance and mortification (which some nowadays seem almost to cashier in practice) would be an error in faith. The extraordinary severities which the Baptist and so many other saints exercised upon themselves ought to be to us sinners a subject of humiliation and self-reproach.

St Peter was making the visitation of his convents, and confirming his religious in that perfect spirit of penance with which he had inspired them, when he fell sick in the convent of Viciosa. The Count of Oropeza, upon whose estate that house was situated, caused him against his will to be removed to his own house, and to take medicines and good nourishing food; but these instead of relieving aggravated his distemper, his pain in his stomach grew more violent, his fever redoubled, and an ulcer was formed in one of his legs.

The holy man, perceiving that his last hour approached, would be carried to the convent of Arenas that he might die in the arms of his brethren. He was no sooner arrived there but he received the holy sacraments. In his last moments he exhorted his brethren to perseverance and to the constant love of holy poverty. Seeing he was come to the end of his course, he repeated those words of the Psalmist, "I have rejoiced in those things which have been said to me. We shall go into the house of the Lord." Having said these words, he rose upon his knees and stooping in that posture calmly expired on the 18th of October, in the year 1562, of his age sixty-three. St Teresa, after mentioning his happy death says, "Since his departure our Lord has been pleased to let me enjoy more of him than I did when he was alive; he has given me advice and counsel in many things, and I have frequently seen him in very great glory. The first time that he appeared to me he said, 'O happy penance, which hath obtained me so great a reward!' with many other things. A year before he died he appeared to me when we were at a distance from one another, and I understood that he was to die and I advertised him of it. When he gave up the ghost he appeared to me and told me that he was going to rest. Behold here the severe penance of his life ending in

so much glory that methinks he comforts me now much more than when he was here. Our Lord told me once that men should ask nothing in his name wherein he would not hear them. I have recommended many things to him that he might beg them of our Lord, and I have always found them granted."<sup>1</sup> St Peter was beatified by Gregory XV in 1622, and canonized by Clement IX in 1669.

It costs nothing for a man to say that he desires to love God; but he lies to his own soul unless he strive to die to himself. The senses must be restrained and taught to obey, and the heart purged from sensual and inordinate attachments, before it can be moulded anew, rendered spiritual, and inflamed with the chaste affections of pure and perfect love. This is the great work of divine grace in weak impure creatures; but the conditions are that perfect humility and penance prepare the way, and be the constant attendants of this love. How imperfect is it in our souls, if it is there at all! and how much is it debased by a mixture of sensual affections and the poisonous stench of self-love not sufficiently vanquished and extinguished, because we neglect these means of grace!

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 19:*

ST ETHBIN or EGBIN, Abbot; he lived twenty years in a cell in the midst of a forest, and was famed for austerities and miracles; died aged 83: ST FRIDESWIDE, virgin, patroness of Oxford, who learned from childhood the most important Christian maxim, that "whatever is not God, is nothing"; she desired to consecrate her life to God in the cloister, and her father founded a nunnery at Oxford in honour of St Mary and all the saints and committed its direction to her care: ST PETER OF ALCANTARA, a reformer of the Franciscan Order who gave St Teresa powerful support in her work of reformation and died in 1562: ST PTOLOMY, ST LUCIUS, and a third (unknown) companion, martyrs in Rome under Marcus Aurelius in 166; "Looking on the good and evil of this world with indifference, they went with joy to martyrdom, considering they were immense gainers by death."

## OCTOBER 20

### ST ARTEMIUS, MARTYR

(A.D. 362)

[From Theodoret, Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 18; Chron. Pasch. p. 297, ed. Du Cange; Julian the Ap. Ep. 10; Ammian. Marcell. lib. xv. c. 23; Fleury, lib. xv. c. 23.]

AUGUSTUS not being willing to entrust the government of Egypt, which was a rich and powerful country, from which the city of Rome was in part supplied with corn, to a senator, like other great provinces of the empire, passed an order that instead of a proconsul it should be governed only by a Roman knight with the title of Augustal prefect. The government of the troops was committed to a general officer with the title of duke or general of Egypt. Artemius was honoured with this command under Constantius, after Lucius and Sebastian. If, in executing some commissions under Constantius, he appeared against St Athanasius, by various contrivances he afforded him means and opportunities to make his escape. If he betrayed too great weakness in obeying his prince at that time, he

<sup>1</sup> Her own life, c. 27.

never approved his heresy. At least that he was orthodox in his faith in the reign of Julian is evident from Theodoret, the Paschal Chronicle, and the ancient Greek Calendars. The idolaters in Egypt accused him before that emperor of having demolished their temples and broken down their idols. Julian summoned him to appear before him at Antioch in 362, and upon this indictment condemned him to be beheaded in that city, about the month of June in 362.

Artemius, engaged in the service of impious Arians, who embued their hands in the blood of the saints, and placed on the pinnacle of worldly honours, stands upon the brink of the precipice, in imminent danger of being tumbled down headlong into everlasting flames; yet the omnipotent hand of God rescues him from these dangers and leads him to bliss by a glorious martyrdom. The view of the many imminent dangers of perishing eternally to which our souls have been often exposed must fill us with the deepest sentiments of gratitude, love, and praise for the infinite and most undeserved mercy by which we have been preserved. Should not we burst forth into incessant hymns of praise and thanksgiving? singing with the royal prophet, " Unless the Lord had helped me, my soul had long ago dwelt in hell." Should not we in a transport of gratitude implore without interruption the divine grace, and resolve to serve God with all our strength, that the fruit of so great mercies may not perish through our malice?

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 20:*

ST AIDAN, Bishop of Mayo, mentioned this day in the Irish Calendar; he died in 768: ST ARTEMIUS, an officer of the Romans appointed as general of Europe, summoned to appear before Julian at Antioch and condemned for having broken the idols; beheaded for the faith in 362: ST BARSABIAS AND HIS COMPANIONS, martyrs in Persia; Barsabias was an abbot, having under him ten monks whom he had educated with great care in the path of Christian perfection; they were marked out among the first to suffer under Sapor; a noble Magian passing by the scene of their martyrdom, illuminated by grace, joined them and gave his life with this heroic band; his wife, children and whole family afterwards professed the true faith: ST SINDULPHUS OF SENDOU, a priest of Rheims: ST JOHN CANTUS, one of the patrons of Poland, a professor at Cracow renowned for his charity and zeal; he died in 1473: St ZENOBIUS, Bishop of Florence, honoured as the patron, protector, and principal apostle of that city; in his study of philosophy he discovered the falsity of idolatry.

## OCTOBER 21

### ST HILARION, ABBOT

HILARION was born in a little town called Tabatha, five miles to the south of Gaza; he sprang like a rose out of thorns, his parents being idolaters. He was sent by them very young to Alexandria to study grammar, when, by his progress in learning, he gave great proofs of his wit, for which, and his good temper and dispositions, he was exceedingly beloved by all that knew him. Being brought to the knowledge of the Christian faith, he was baptized and became immediately a new man, renouncing all the mad sports of the circus and the entertainments of the theatre, and taking no delight but in the churches and assemblies of the faithful. Having heard

of St Antony, whose name was famous in Egypt, he went into the desert to see him. Moved by the example of his virtue he changed his habit and stayed with him two months, observing his manner of life, his fervour in prayer, his humility in receiving the brethren, his severity in reproofing them, his earnestness in exhorting them, and his perseverance in austerities. But not being able to bear the frequent concourse of those who resorted to St Antony to be healed of diseases or delivered from devils, and being desirous to begin to serve God like St Antony in perfect solitude, he returned with certain monks into his own country. Upon his arrival there, finding his father and mother both dead, he gave part of his goods to his brethren and the rest to the poor, reserving nothing for himself. He was then but fifteen years of age, this happening about the year 307. He retired into a desert seven miles from Majuma, toward Egypt, between the seashore on one side and certain fens on the other. His friends forewarned him that the place was notorious for murders and robberies, but his answer was that he feared nothing but eternal death. Everybody admired his fervour and extraordinary manner of life. In the beginning of his retirement certain robbers who lurked in those deserts asked him what he would do if thieves and assassins came to him? He answered, "The poor and naked fear no thieves." "But they may kill you," said they. "It is true," said the holy man, "and for this very reason I am not afraid of them, because it is my endeavour to be always prepared for death." So great fervour and resolution in one so young and so tender as our saint was both surprising and edifying to all who knew him. His constitution was so weak and delicate that the least excess of heat or cold affected him very sensibly; yet his whole clothing consisted only of a piece of sack-cloth, a leather coat, which St Antony gave him, and an ordinary short cloak. Living in solitude, he thought himself at liberty to practise certain mortifications which the respect we owe to our neighbour makes unseasonable in the world. He cut his hair only once a year, against Easter; never changed any coat till it was worn out, and never washed the sack-cloth which he had once put on, saying, "It is idle to look for neatness in a hair shirt."

At his first entering on this penitential life he renounced the use of bread; and for six years together his whole diet was fifteen figs a day, which he never took till sunset. When he felt the attacks of any temptation of the flesh, being angry with himself and beating his breast, he would say to his body, "I will take order, thou little ass, that thou shalt not kick; I will feed thee with straw instead of corn; and will load and weary thee, that so thou mayest think rather how to get a little bit to eat than of pleasure." He then retrenched part of his scanty meal, and sometimes fasted three or four days without eating; and when after this he was fainting, he sustained his body only with a few dried figs and the juice of

herbs. At the same time, praying and singing, he would be breaking the ground with a rake, that his labour might add to the trouble of his fasting. His employment was digging or tilling the earth, or, in imitation of the Egyptian monks, weaving small twigs together with great rushes in making baskets whereby he provided himself with the frugal necessaries of life. During the first four years of his penance he had no other shelter from the inclemencies of the weather than a little hovel or arbour which he made himself of reeds and rushes which he found in a neighbouring marsh, and which he had woven together. Afterwards he built himself a little cell, which was still to be seen in St Jerom's time; it was but four feet broad and five feet in height, and was a little longer than the extent of his body, so that a person would have rather taken it for a grave than a house. During the course of his penance he made some alteration in his diet, but never in favour of his appetites. From the age of twenty-one he for three years lived on a measure which was little more than half a pint of pulse steeped in cold water a-day; and for the next three years his whole food was dry bread with salt and water. From his twenty-seventh year to his thirty-first he ate only wild herbs and raw roots; and from thirty-one to thirty-five he took for his daily food six ounces of barley bread a day, to which he added a few kitchen herbs, but half boiled and without oil. But perceiving his sight to grow dim and his body to be subject to an itching with an unnatural kind of scurf and roughness, he added a little oil to this diet. Thus he went on till his sixty-fourth year when, conceiving by the decay of his strength that his death was drawing near, he retrenched even his bread, and from that time to his eightieth year his whole meal never exceeded five ounces. When he was fourscore years of age there were made for him little weak broths or gruels of flour and herbs, the whole quantity of his meat and drink scarce amounting to the weight of four ounces. Thus he passed his whole life; and he never broke his fast till sunset, not even upon the highest feasts or in his greatest sickness.

Anyone who considers the condition of man in this state of trial and the malice of the enemy of our salvation will easily conceive that our saint did not pass all these years, nor arrive at so eminent a degree of virtue and sanctity, without violent temptations and assaults from the infernal spirit; in all which he was victorious by the assistance of omnipotent grace. Sometimes his soul was covered with a dark cloud, and his heart was dry and oppressed with bitter anguish; but the dearer heaven seemed to his cries on such occasions, the louder and the more earnestly he persevered knocking. To have dropped the shield of prayer under these temptations would have been to perish. At other times his mind was haunted and his imagination filled with impure images, or with the vanities of the theatre and circus. The phantoms of the enemy St Hilarion dissipated by casting himself upon his knees and signing his forehead with the cross

of Christ; and, being enlightened and strengthened by a supernatural grace, he discovered his snares, and never suffered himself to be imposed upon by the artifices by which that subtle fiend strove to withdraw him from holy prayer, in which the saint spent the days and great part of the nights.

St Hilarion had spent above twenty years in his desert when he wrought his first miracle. A certain married woman of Eleutheropolis, who was the scorn of her husband for her barrenness, sought him out in his solitude, and by her tears and importunities prevailed upon him to pray that God would bless her with fruitfulness; and before the year's end she brought forth a son. A second miracle much enhanced the saint's reputation. Elpidius, who was afterwards prefect of the *prætorium*,<sup>1</sup> and his wife Aristeneta, returning from a visit of devotion they had made to St Antony to receive his blessing and instructions, arrived at Gaza, where their three children fell sick, and their fever proving superior to the power of medicines they were brought to the last extremity, and their recovery despaired of by the physicians. The mother, like one distracted, addressed herself to Hilarion, who, moved by her tears, went to Gaza to visit them. Upon his invoking the holy name of Jesus by their bedside, the children fell into a violent sweat, by which they were so refreshed as to be able to eat, to know their mother, and kiss the saint's hand. Upon the report of this miracle many flocked to the saint, desiring to embrace a monastic life under his direction. Till that time neither Syria nor Palestine were acquainted with that penitential state; so that St Hilarion was the first founder of it in those countries, as Antony had been in Egypt. Among other miraculous cures, several persons possessed by devils were delivered by our saint. The most remarkable were Marisitas, a young man of the territory about Jerusalem, so strong that he boasted he could carry seven bushels of corn; and Orion, a rich man of the city of Aila, who, after his cure, pressed the saint to accept many great presents, at least for the poor. But the holy hermit persisted obstinately to refuse touching any of them, bidding him bestow them himself. St Hilarion restored sight to a woman of Facidia, a town near Rinocorura, in Egypt, who had been blind ten years. A citizen of Majuma, called Italicus, who was a Christian, kept horses to run in the circus against a Duumvir of Gaza, who adored Marnas, which was the great idol of Gaza, that word signifying in Syriac, Lord of men.<sup>2</sup> Italicus, knowing that his adversary had recourse to spells to stop his horses, came to St Hilarion, by whose blessing his horses seemed to fly while the others seemed fettered; upon seeing which the people cried out that Marnas was vanquished by Christ. From the model which our saint set, a great number of monasteries were founded all over Palestine. St Hilarion visited them all on certain days before the vintage.

<sup>1</sup> Emmian, Marcel. lib. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Bochart, Canaan, lib. ii. c. 12; Calmet, &c.

St Hilarion was informed by revelation in Palestine, where he then was, of the death of St Antony. He was then about sixty-five years old, and had been for two years much afflicted at the great number of bishops, priests, and people that were continually resorting to him, by which his contemplation was interrupted. At length, regretting the loss of that sweet solitude and obscurity which he formerly enjoyed, he resolved to leave that country, to prevent which the people assembled to the number of ten thousand to watch him. He told them he would neither eat nor drink till they let him go; and seeing him pass seven days without taking anything they left him. He then chose forty monks who were able to walk without breaking their fast (that is, without eating till after sunset), and with them he travelled into Egypt. On the fifth day he arrived at Peleusium; and in six days more at Babylon, in Egypt. Two days after he came to the city of Aphroditon, where he applied himself to the deacon Baisanes, who used to let dromedaries to those who had desired to visit St Antony, for carrying water which they had occasion for in that desert. The saint desired to celebrate the anniversary of St Antony's death by watching all night in the place where he died. After travelling three days in a horrible desert they came to St Antony's mountain, where they found two monks, Isaac and Pelusius, who had been his disciples, and the first his interpreter. It was a very high steep rock of a mile in circuit, at the foot of which was a rivulet, with abundance of palm-trees on the borders. St Hilarion walked all over the place with the disciples of St Antony. Here it was, said they, that he sang, here he prayed; there he laboured, and there he reposed himself when he was weary. He himself planted these vines and these little trees; he tilled this piece of ground with his own hands; he dug this basin with abundance of labour, to water his garden, and he used this hoe to work with several years together. St Hilarion laid himself upon his bed and kissed it as if it had been still warm. The cell contained no more space in length and breadth than what was necessary for a man to stretch himself in to sleep. On the top of the mountain (to which the ascent was very difficult, turning like a vine) they found two cells of the same size, to which he often retired to avoid a number of visitors and even the conversation of his own disciples: they were hewn in a rock, nothing but doors being added to them. When they came to the garden, "Do you see," said Isaac, "this little garden planted with trees and pot-herbs? About three years since a herd of wild asses coming to destroy it, he stopped one of the first of them and, striking him on the sides with his staff, said, 'Why do you eat what you did not sow?' From that time forward they only came hither to drink, without meddling with the trees or herbs." St Hilarion asked to see the place where he was buried. They carried him to a bye place; but it is uncertain whether they showed it him or no; for they showed no grave, and only said that St Antony had given the

strictest charge that his grave should be concealed, fearing lest Pergamius, who was a very rich man in that country, should carry the body home and cause a church to be built for it.

St Hilarion returned from this place to Aphroditon, and, retiring with only two disciples into a neighbouring desert, exercised himself with more earnestness than ever in abstinence and silence; saying, according to his custom, that he then only began to serve Jesus Christ. It had not rained in the country for three years, that is, ever since the death of St Antony, when the people in deep affliction and misery addressed themselves to St Hilarion, whom they looked upon as St Antony's successor, imploring his compassion and prayers. The saint, sensibly affected with their distress, lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, and immediately obtained a plentiful rain. Also many labourers and herdsmen who were stung by serpents and venomous beasts were perfectly cured by anointing their wounds with oil which he had blessed and given them. Though oil be the natural and sovereign antidote against poison, these cures by his blessing were esteemed miraculous. The saint, seeing the extraordinary honours which were paid him in that place, departed privately towards Alexandria, in order to proceed to the desert of Oasis. It not being his custom to stop in great cities, he turned from Alexandria into Brutium, a remote suburb of that city, where several monks dwelt. He left this place the same evening, and when these monks very importunately pressed his stay he told them that it was necessary for their security that he should leave them. The sequel showed that he had the spirit of prophecy; for that very night armed men arrived there in pursuit of him, with an order to put him to death. When Julian the Apostate ascended the throne, the pagans of Gaza obtained an order from that prince to kill him, in revenge of the affront he had put upon their god Marnas, and of the many conversions he had made; and they had sent this party into Egypt to execute the sentence. The soldiers, finding themselves disappointed at Brutium, said he well deserved the character of a magician which he had at Gaza. The saint spent about a year in the desert of Oasis, and, finding that he was too well known in that country ever to lie concealed there, determined to seek shelter in some remote island, and, going to Paretonium in Lybia, embarked there with one companion for Sicily. He landed at Pachynus, a famous promontory on the eastern side of the island, now called Capo di Passaro. Upon landing he offered to pay for his passage and that of his companion with a copy of the gospels which he had written in his youth with his own hand; but the master, seeing their whole stock consisted in that manuscript and the clothes on their backs, would not accept of it; he even esteemed himself indebted to this passenger, who by his prayers had delivered his son, who was possessed by a devil, on board the vessel. St Hilarion, fearing lest he should be discovered by some oriental merchants if he settled near

the coast, travelled twenty miles up the country and stopped in an unfrequented wild place; where, by gathering sticks, he made every day a fagot, which he sent his disciple, whose name was Zanan, to sell at the next village, in order to buy a little bread. Hesychius, the saint's beloved disciple, had sought him in the East and through Greece when, at Methone, now called Modon, in Peloponnesus, he heard that a prophet had appeared in Sicily who wrought many miracles. He embarked and arrived at Pachynus; and inquiring for the holy man at the first village, found that everybody knew him; he was not more distinguished by his miracles than by his disinterestedness; for he could never be prevailed upon to take anything, not so much as a morsel of bread, from anyone.

St Hilarion was desirous to go into some strange country, where not even his language should be understood. Hesychius therefore carried him to Epidaurus in Dalmatia, now Old Ragusa, the ruins of which city are seen near the present capital of the republic of that name. Miracles here again defeated the saint's design of living unknown. St Hilarion, seeing it impossible to live there unknown, fled away in the night in a small vessel to the island of Cyprus. Being arrived there, he retired to a place two miles from Paphos. He had not been there three weeks when such as were possessed with devils in any part of the island began to cry out that Hilarion, the servant of Jesus Christ, was come. He expelled the evil spirits, but, sighing after the tranquillity of closer retirement, considered how he could make his escape to some other country; but the inhabitants watched him that he might not leave them. After two years Hesychius persuaded him to lay aside that design and retire to a solitary place which he had found twelve miles from the shore, not unpleasantly situated among very rough and craggy mountains, where there was water with fruit-trees, which advice the saint followed, but he never tasted the fruit. St Jerom mentions that though he lived so many years in Palestine, he never went up to visit the holy places at Jerusalem but once; and then stayed only one day in that city. He went once that he might not seem to despise that devotion; but did not go oftener, lest he should seem persuaded that God or his religious worship is confined to any particular place. His chief reason, doubtless, was to shun the distractions of populous places that as much as possible nothing might interrupt the close union of his soul to God. The saint, in the eightieth year of his age, whilst Hesychius was absent, wrote him a short letter with his own hand in the nature of a last will and testament, in which he bequeathed to him all his riches, namely, his book of the gospels, his sackcloth, hood, and little cloak. Many pious persons came from Paphos to see him in his last sickness, hearing he had foretold that he was to go to our Lord. With them there came a holy woman named Constantia, whose son-in-law and daughter he had freed from death by anointing them with oil. He caused them to swear that as soon as he should

have expired, they would immediately commit his corpse to the earth, apparelled as he was, with his hair-cloth, hood, and cloak. His distemper increasing upon him, very little heat appeared to remain in his body, nor did anything seem to remain in him of a living man besides his understanding, only his eyes were still open. He expressed his sense of the divine judgments, but encouraged his soul to an humble confidence in the mercy of his Judge and Redeemer, saying to himself, " Go forth, what dost thou fear? go forth, my soul, what dost thou apprehend? Behold, it is now threescore and ten years that thou hast served Christ; and art thou afraid of death? " He had scarcely spoken these words but he gave up the ghost, and was immediately buried as he had ordered.

St Hilarion died in 371, or the following year, being about eighty years of age; for he was sixty-five years old at the death of St Antony. Hesychius, who was in Palestine, made haste to Cyprus upon hearing this news and, pretending to take up his dwelling in the same garden, after ten months found an opportunity of secretly carrying off the saint's body into Palestine, where he interred it in his monastery, near Majuma. It was as entire as it was when alive, and the cloths were untouched. Many miracles were wrought, both in Cyprus and Palestine, through his intercession, as St Jerom assures us. Sozomen mentions his festival to have been kept with great solemnity in the fifth age.<sup>1</sup> See his life written by St Jerom before the year 392.

If this saint trembled after an innocent, penitential, and holy life, because he considered how perfect the purity and sanctity of a soul must be to stand before him who is infinite purity and infinite justice, how much ought tepid, slothful, and sinful Christians to fear? Whilst love inflames the saints with an ardent desire of being united to their God in the kingdom of pure love and security, a holy fear of his justice checks and humbles in them all presumption. This fear must never sink into despondency, abjection, or despair; but quicken our sloth, animate our fervour, and raise our courage; it must be solicitous, not anxious. Love and hope must fill our souls with sweet peace and joy, and with an entire confidence in the infinite mercy and goodness of God, and the merits of our divine Redeemer.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 21:*

ST FINTAN, surnamed MUNNO, " famous for virtues, miracles and disciples"; commemorated in the old Scottish Breviary as ST MUNDUS, Abbot: ST HILARION, the child of idolaters sent to Alexandria to study grammar: beloved by all who knew him, he " feared nothing but eternal death": ST URSULA AND COMPANIONS, virgins and martyrs, died gloriously in defence of their chastity against the Huns, in the fifth age; it appears to be agreed that they came from Britain into Cologne, the place of their martyrdom on 21st October, 451.

OCTOBER 22

ST PHILIP, BISHOP OF HERACLEA, AND COMPANIONS,  
MARTYRS

(A.D. 304)

[From their original acts, published by Mabillon in *Vetora Analecta*, t. iv. p. 134,  
and more correctly by Ruinart, p. 409; Tillemont, t. v.]

PHILIP, a venerable old man, Bishop of Heraclea, the metropolis of Thrace, was an illustrious martyr of Christ in the persecution of Diocletian. Having discharged every duty of a faithful minister in the characters of deacon and priest in that city, he was raised to the episcopal dignity, and governed that church with great virtue and prudence when it was shaken by violent storms. To extend and perpetuate the work of God, he was careful to train up many disciples in the study of sacred learning and in the practice of solid piety. Two of the most eminent among them had the happiness to be made companions of his martyrdom; namely, Severus, a priest whose laborious and penitential life proved him to be a true disciple of the cross, and Hermes, a deacon, who was formerly the first magistrate of the city and in that office by his charity and universal benevolence had gained the esteem and affection of all the citizens; but after he was engaged in the ministry gained his livelihood with his own hands and brought up his son to do the same. Diocletian's first edicts against the Christians being issued out, many advised the holy bishop to leave the city; but he would not even stir out of the church, continuing to exhort the brethren to constancy and patience, and preparing them for the celebration of the feast of the Epiphany. Whilst he preached to them, Aristomachus, the stationary (that is, an officer of the town), came, by the governor's order, to seal up the door of the church. The bishop said to him, "Do you imagine that God dwells within walls, and not rather in the hearts of men?" He continued to hold his assemblies before the doors of the church. The next day certain officers came and set their seal upon the sacred vessels and books. The faithful, who beheld this, were much grieved; but the bishop, who stood leaning against the door of the church, encouraged them with his inflamed discourses. Afterwards the governor, Bassus, finding Philip and many of his flock assembled before the church door, gave orders that they should be apprehended and brought before him. Being seated on his tribunal, he said to them, "Which of you is the teacher of the Christians?" Philip replied, "I am the person you seek." Bassus said, "You know that the emperor has forbidden your assemblies. Surrender into my hands the vessels of gold and silver which you make use of, and the books which you read." The bishop answered, "The vessels and treasure we will give you; for it is not by precious metal, but

by charity, that God is honoured. But the sacred books it neither becomes you to demand nor me to surrender." The governor ordered executioners to be called into court, and commanded Muccapor, the most noted among them for his inhumanity, to torture the holy prelate. Philip bore his torments with invincible courage. Hermes told the governor that it was not in his power to destroy the word of God, even though he should take away all the writings in which the true doctrine is contained. The judge commanded him to be scourged. The governor distributed the vessels and books among his officers; and, to please the infidels and terrify the Christians, caused Philip and the other prisoners to be brought to the market-place, surrounded with guards, and the church to be uncovered by taking off the tiles. In the meantime, by his orders, the soldiers burned the sacred writings, the flames mounting so high as to frighten the standers-by. This being told to Philip, in the market-place, he took occasion from this fire to discourse of the vengeance with which God threatens the wicked, and represented to the people how their gods and temples had often been burned, beginning with Hercules, protector of their city, from whom it derived its name. By this time Caliphronius, a pagan priest, appeared in the market-place with his ministers, who brought with them the necessary preparations for a sacrifice and a profane feast. Immediately after the governor Bassus came, followed by a great multitude, some of whom pitied the suffering Christians, others, especially the Jews, clamoured loudly against them. Bassus pressed the bishop to sacrifice to the gods, to the emperors, and to the fortune of the city. Then, pointing at a large and beautiful statue of Hercules, he bid him consider what veneration was due to that piece. Philip showed the absurdity of adoring a base metal and the work of a drunken statuary. Bassus asked Hermes if he, at least, would sacrifice. "I will not," replied Hermes, "I am a Christian." Bassus said, "If we can persuade Philip to offer sacrifice, will you follow his example?" Hermes answered he would not; neither could they persuade Philip. After many useless threats and pressing them to sacrifice at least to the emperors, he ordered them to be carried to prison. As they went along, some of the rabble insolently pushed Philip and often threw him down; but he rose with a joyful countenance, without the least indignation or grief. All admired his patience; and the martyrs entered the prison joyfully, singing a psalm of thanksgiving to God. A few days after they were allowed to stay at the house of one Pancras, near the prison, where many Christians and some new converts resorted to them to be instructed in the mysteries of faith. After some time they were remanded to a prison, contiguous to the theatre, which had a door into that building with a secret entry. They there received the crowds that came to visit them in the night.

In the meantime, Bassus going out of office at the expiration of his

term, one Justin succeeded him. The Christians were much afflicted at this change; for Bassus often yielded to reason, his wife having for some time worshipped the true God herself: but Justin was a violent man. Zoilus, the magistrate of the city, brought Philip before him, who declared to the saint the emperor's order, and pressed him to sacrifice. Philip answered, "I am a Christian, and cannot do what you require. Your commission is to punish our refusal, not to force our compliance." Justin said, "You know not the torments which shall be your portion." Philip replied, "You may torment, but will not conquer me; no power can induce me to sacrifice." Justin told him he should be dragged by the feet through the streets of the city, and if he survived that punishment should be thrown into prison again to suffer new torments. Philip answered, "God grant it may be so." Justin commanded the soldiers to tie his feet and drag him along. They dashed him against so many stones that he was torn and bruised all over his body. The Christians carried him in their arms when he was brought back to his dungeon. The enraged idolaters had long been in quest of Severus, the priest, who had hid himself when inspired by the Holy Ghost; he at length surrendered himself, and was carried before the governor and committed to prison. Hermes was likewise steady in his examination before Justin, and was treated in the same manner. The three martyrs were kept imprisoned in a bad air seven months, and then removed to Adrianople, where they were confined in a private country house till the arrival of the governor. The next day, holding his court at the Thermæ, he caused Philip to be brought before him and to be beaten with rods till his bowels appeared bare. His courage astonished the executioners and Justin himself, who remanded him to prison. Hermes was next examined, and to him all the officers of the court were favourable, because having been formerly decurio or chief magistrate of the city of Heraclea, he had obliged them all on several occasions, though he declared in his examinations that he had been a Christian from his cradle. He persisted in this profession, and was sent back to prison, where the holy martyrs joyfully gave thanks to Jesus Christ for this beginning of their victory. Philip, though of a weak and delicate constitution, did not feel the least inconvenience. Three days after this Justin caused them to be brought again before his tribunal, and having in vain pressed Philip to obey the emperors, said to Hermes, "If the approach of death makes this man think life not worth preserving, do not you be insensible to its blessings, and offer sacrifice." Hermes replied by showing the blindness and absurdity of idolatry; so that Justin, being enraged, cried out, "Thou speakest as if thou wouldest fain make me a Christian." Having then advised with his assessor and others, he pronounced sentence in these terms: "We order that Philip and Hermes who, despising the commands of the emperor, have rendered themselves unworthy of the name of Romans, be burned,

that others may learn to obey." They went joyfully to the pile. Philip's feet were so sore that he could not walk, and therefore he was carried to execution. Hermes followed him with much difficulty, being afflicted also in his feet; and he said to him, "Master, let us hasten to go to our Lord. Why should we be concerned about our feet, since we shall have no more occasion for them?" When they came to the place of punishment, the executioners, according to custom, covered Philip's feet and legs with earth up to the knees; and having tied his hands behind his back, nailed them to the pile. The martyrs praised and gave thanks to God as long as they were able to speak. Their bodies were found entire; Philip having his hands stretched out as in prayer; Hermes with a clear countenance, only his ear a little blue. Justin ordered their bodies to be thrown into the Hebrus; but certain citizens of Adrianople went in boats with nets, and fished them out while they were entire and hid them for three days at a place called Ogestiron, twelve miles from the city. Severus the priest, who had been left alone in prison, being informed of their martyrdom, rejoiced at their glory and earnestly besought God not to think him unworthy to partake in it, since he had confessed his name with them. He was heard, and suffered martyrdom the day after them. The order for burning the holy scriptures and destroying the churches points out the time of their suffering to have been after the first edicts of Diocletian. The 22nd of October is consecrated in the Martyrologies to their memory.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 22:*

ST DONATUS, an Irishman or Scot by birth, pious and learned, Bishop of Ficosole in Tuscany : ST MARK, Bishop of Jerusalem : ST MELLO, Bishop of Rouen, said to have been a native of Britain : ST NUNILO and ST ALODIA, virgins, martyred in Spain : ST PHILIP, Bishop of Heraclea, AND HIS COMPANIONS, martyred under Diocletian : SEVERUS, a priest, a true disciple of the cross, and HERMES, a deacon, formerly the first magistrate of the city, were amongst this heroic band.

### OCTOBER 23

## ST THEODORET, PRIEST AND MARTYR (A.D. 362)

[From his authentic acts mentioned by Sozomen, lib. v. c. 8, and by Theodoret, lib. iii. c. 13, published by Mabillon, Vet. Analect. t. iv. p. 127, and by Ruinart, Act. Sine. p. 592. See Baillet, p. 355.]

JULIAN, uncle to the Emperor Julian, and likewise an apostate, was by his nephew made Count or Governor of the East, of which district Antioch was the capital. Being informed that in the treasury of the chief Church of the Catholics there was a great quantity of gold and silver plate, he was determined to seize it into his own hands, and published an order by which he banished the clergy out of the city. Theodoret, a zealous priest, who had been very active during the reign of Constantius in destroying idols and in building churches and oratories over the relics of martyrs, and who was keeper of the sacred vessels (not of the great church then in the hands

of Euzoius and his Arians,<sup>1</sup> but of some other church of the Catholics), refused to abandon his flock, and continued openly to hold sacred assemblies with prayers and sacrifices. Count Julian commanded him to be apprehended and brought before him with his hands bound behind his back. Julian charged him with having thrown down the statues of the gods, and built churches, in the foregoing reign. Theodoret owned he had built churches upon the tombs of martyrs, and retorted upon the count that after having known the true God he had abandoned his worship. The count ordered him to be beaten on the soles of his feet, then buffeted on his face, and afterwards tied to four stakes and stretched with cords and pulleys by his legs and arms; which was done with such violence that his body seemed extended to the length of eight feet. The tyrant jeered him all the time; but the martyr exhorted him to acknowledge the true God and Jesus Christ, his Son, by whom all things were made. Julian ordered that he should be tormented on the rack, and when the blood was streaming abundantly from his wounds, said to him, "I perceive you do not sufficiently feel your torments." The martyr replied, "I do not feel them, because God is with me." Julian caused lighted matches to be applied to his sides. The saint, whilst his flesh was burning and the fat was melting in drops, lifted up his eyes to heaven and prayed that God would glorify his name throughout all ages. At these words the executioners fell on their faces to the ground. The count himself was at first affrighted, but recovering himself he bid them again draw near the martyr with their torches. They excused themselves, saying they saw four angels clothed in white with Theodoret. Julian, in a rage, ordered them to be thrown into the water and drowned. Theodoret said to them, "Go before, my brethren; I will follow by vanquishing the enemy." The count asked him who that enemy was. "The devil," said the martyr, "for whom you fight. Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, is he who giveth victory." He then explained how God sent his Word into the world to clothe himself with human flesh in the womb of a virgin, and that this God made man suffered freely, and by his sufferings merited for us salvation. The count, in the impotence of his rage, threatened to put him instantly to death. Theodoret declared that was his desire, and said, "You, Julian, shall die in your bed under the sharpest torments; and your master, who hopes to vanquish the Persians, shall be himself vanquished; an unknown hand shall bereave him of life: he shall return no more to the territories of the Romans." The count dictated a sentence by which he condemned the martyr to be beheaded, which he underwent with joy in the year 362.

On the day of the martyrdom of St Theodoret, the count, according to an order he had received from the emperor, went and seized the

<sup>1</sup> Theodoret, lib. iii. c. 8; Bolland. t. iii.; Maij. in Tr. prælim. p. 9, n. 34.

effects of the great Church of Antioch, having with him Felix, count of the largesses, or chief treasurer, and Elpidius, count of the private patrimony, that is, intendant of the demesnes, who were also apostates. Felix, as he was viewing the rich and magnificent vessels which the Emperors Constantine and Constantius had given to the church, impiously said, “Behold with what rich plate the Son of Mary is served.” Count Julian also profaned the sacred vessels in the most outrageous manner,<sup>1</sup> and these apostates made them the subject of their blasphemies and banter. Their impieties did not remain long unpunished. Count Julian passed the following night with much disquiet, and the next morning presented to the emperor an inventory of what he had seized, and informed him of what he had done with relation to St Theodoret. Herein he had no other view than to please that prince. But the emperor told him plainly that he approved not his putting any Christian to death merely on account of his religion, and complained that this would afford an occasion to the Galileans to write against him, and to make a saint and a martyr of Theodoret. The count, who little expected such a reception, remained greatly confounded. The fear with which he was seized permitted him not to eat much at the sacrifice, at which he assisted with the emperor, and he retired to his own house, much troubled in mind, so that he would take no nourishment. That evening he felt a violent pain in his bowels, and fell into a grievous and unknown disease. Philostorgius says he remained forty days without speech or sense. He then came to himself and bare testimony of his own impiety, for which he was thus severely punished; and pressed his wife to go and pray for him at church, and to desire the prayers of the Christians. He entreated the emperor to restore to the Christians the churches which he had taken from them, and to cause them to be opened. But he could not obtain from him even that favour, and received only this answer, “It was not I who shut them up, and I will give no orders to have them set open.” The count sent him word that it was for his sake that he had quitted Christianity, and now perished so miserably. But Julian, without showing the least compassion, or fearing himself the hand of God, sent him this answer: “You have not been faithful to the gods; and it is for that you suffer such torments.” At length the impostaumes, which spread very far, and the worms which gnawed him continually, reduced him to the utmost extremity. He threw them up without ceasing, the three last days of his life, with a stench which he himself could not bear. His nephew, Julian, lamented him as little when dead as he had pitied him living, and continued to declare that this calamity befell him because he had not been faithful to the gods.<sup>2</sup>

With what inexpressible horrors is the sinner seized when he finds

<sup>1</sup> See Tillem. Hist. Eccl. t. vii. p. 395; Jortin's remarks on Eccl. Hist. vol. iii. p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> See the Acts of SS. Bonosus, &c., Aug. 21, t. viii.

himself overtaken by divine vengeance, or in the jaws of death! The servant of God finds in his God a solid comfort in all events, reposing in him a confidence which nothing can shake, and ever rejoicing in his holy will, to which with love and assurance he commits himself in life and death. In a filial fear, and sincere compunction for his sins, he ceases not with sweet confidence to invoke his God, his Redeemer, Friend and Protector, begging that he exert his omnipotence (which is nowhere so wonderfully manifested as in the pardon of sinners) and that he display his eternal and boundless mercy in bringing him to true repentance and salvation, and that he ordain all things with regard to him according to his holy will, and to the greater glory of his adorable name.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 23:*

**THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER** : St IGNATIUS, Patriarch of Constantinople : St JOHN CAPISTRAN, who took the Franciscan habit at the age of thirty at Perugia, in 1415 : St ROMANUS, piously brought up and placed at the Court of Clotaire II, became chancellor to that prince and later was made Archbishop of Rouen : St SEVERIN, Archbishop of Cologne, who purged his own diocese and that of Tongres from Arianism ; St Gregory of Tours tells us that this saint knew by revelation of the death and glory of St Martin ; another St SEVERIN or SURIN, of Bordeaux, whom some think to have been the same with the foregoing of Cologne : St THEODORET, priest and martyr : and the **BLESSED URSULINE MARTYRS** (see October 17), the Superiorress of whom, with the remaining six, went to the scaffold for the Faith which their Order was established to teach (1794).

#### OCTOBER 24

### ST PROCLUS, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE

(A.D. 447)

[From his writings, *Liberatus*, c. 10 ; *Socrates*, lib. vii. c. 28, 41, 45 ; *Chron. Paschal.* *Marcellin.* in *chron.*, &c. See *Orsi*, t. xiii. and xiv.]

St PROCLUS was a native of Constantinople, and was very young when he was made a reader of that church. The service of the church did not hinder him from closely following his studies, and he was some time a disciple of St Chrysostom, and his secretary. Atticus ordained him deacon and priest. After his death many pitched upon Proclus as the fittest person to be placed in that important see; but Sisinnius was chosen, who ordained Proclus Archbishop of Cyzicus, metropolis of the Hellespont. The inhabitants of that city, being unwilling to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Constantinople, refused to receive him, and chose Dalmatius, a monk. Proclus therefore continued at Constantinople, where he got a great reputation by his preaching. Upon the demise of Sisinnius in 427, many again cast their eyes upon him as the most worthy of that dignity; but others alleged that he had been chosen bishop of another see, and that translations were forbid by the canons. Nestorius, who was raised to that dignity, advanced his errors at first covertly, but at length openly. St Proclus courageously maintained the truth against him, and in 429 preached

a sermon (which is the first among his printed homilies) to show that the Blessed Virgin ought to be styled the Mother of God. Nestorius, who was present, publicly contradicted him in the church. When that heresiarch was deposed in 431, Maximian was chosen to succeed him, those that were for St Proclus being overruled by the above-mentioned exception; but after Maximian's death in 434, this saint, who had never been able to take possession of the see of Cyzicus, was promoted to that of Constantinople. The mildness with which he treated even the most obstinate among the Nestorians, Arians, and other heretics was a distinguishing part of his character;<sup>1</sup> though he strenuously supported the Catholic faith, and kept a correspondence and lived in close union and friendship with the pope, St Cyril of Alexandria, and John of Antioch.

The style of this father is concise, sententious, and full of lively witty turns, more proper to please and delight than to move the heart. This sort of composition requires much pains and study; and though this father was mighty successful in his way, it is not to be compared to the easy natural gravity of St Basil or the sweet style of St Chrysostom. The first part of the year 447 is memorable for a dreadful earthquake, which was felt from place to place during six months in divers parts of Egypt and the East, especially near the Hellespont, and in Bithynia, in Phrygia, and at Antioch in Syria. The earth shook like a ship abandoned to the mercy of the winds, and tossed by the fury of waves worked up by a storm. Amidst the ruins of many stately buildings men ran to and fro almost distracted with fear and horror, not being able to find any place of refuge or security. St Proclus, with his clergy, followed his scattered flock, and ceased not to comfort and exhort them amidst their afflictions, and to implore the divine mercy with them. The people continually answered by a triple repetition of this prayer, "Have mercy on us, O Lord." Theophanes<sup>2</sup> and other Greek historians tell us that a child was taken up into the air and heard angels singing the Trisagion, or triple doxology; which gave occasion to St Proclus to teach the people to sing it in these words, "Holy God, holy strong, holy immortal, have mercy on us." It is at least agreed that St Proclus with the people used this prayer, and that thereupon the earthquakes ceased. This trisagion was inserted by him in the divine office, which the Greek church uses to this day. The Orientals ascribe to St Proclus the last revision of the liturgies both of St Chrysostom (or of the church of Constantinople) and of St James (or of the church of Jerusalem). Our saint is styled by St Cyril, "A man full of piety, perfectly skilled in ecclesiastical discipline, and a strict observer of the canons." Pope Sixtus III gives him the like praises, and Vigilius<sup>3</sup> calls him the most learned of prelates. St Proclus died on the 24th of October in 447,

<sup>1</sup> Socrat. lib. vii. c. 41, 42.

<sup>2</sup> St Ambr. lib. iii. de Spir. Sanct. c. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Chron. p. 64.

the same year in which the earthquakes had happened. His name is placed in the Greek Menologies and in the Muscovite Calendar.<sup>1</sup>

How many great, how many learned, how many once holy men have with Nestorius suffered shipwreck before the end of their course! At the sight of such examples who does not tremble for himself? If we know ourselves, we shall be persuaded that no one is weaker and frailer than we are. When, therefore, we read of the fall or sins of others, we ought to turn our eyes upon ourselves; to adore the divine mercy which has still borne with us, and is yet ready with stretched-forth arms to embrace us: to shake off our sloth in the practice of virtue, enter upon a fervent penitential life, and without ceasing call upon God in fear and humility. He is our strength and support, who is almighty and most willing and desirous to save us, if our wilful wretchedness and pride stand not in the way.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 24:*

St FELIX, Bishop of Thiabara in the proconsular Africa, martyred for his refusal to give up the books and writings belonging to his church; at the place of his execution he cheerfully thanked God for all His mercies, and was beheaded, in 303, aged fifty-six: St MAGLIORE, a fellow-disciple of St Sampson under St Iltutus in Wales; his labours were rewarded by a great harvest of souls; at the age of seventy he resigned his bishopric and retired to a desert on the Continent, but later still he governed a monastery of sixty monks in Jersey: St PROCLUS: and St RAPHAEL, archangel, known to us from the Book of Tobias; his name means "medicine of God," and his special office is to help and pray for those in distress.

## OCTOBER 25

### ST CHRYSANTHUS AND ST DARIAS, MARTYRS (IN THE THIRD CENTURY)

[See Jos. Assemani, in Cal. Universa, t. vi. p. 198, and Falconius comment. ad tab. Ruthenias Capponianus, p. 79, ad 19 Martij. Their acts in Metaphrastes, Lipomanus, and Surius are of no authority.]

CHRYSANTHUS and DARIAS were strangers who came from the east to Rome, the first from Alexandria, the second from Athens, as the Greeks tell us in their Menæa. They add that Chrysanthus, after having been espoused to Darias, persuaded her to prefer a state of perpetual virginity to that of marriage, that they might more easily, with perfect purity of heart, trample the world under their feet, and accomplish the solemn consecration they had made of themselves to Christ in baptism. The zeal with which they professed the faith of Christ distinguished them in the eyes of the idolaters; they were accused and, after suffering many torments, finished their course by a glorious martyrdom, according to their acts in the reign of Numerian: Baillet thinks rather in the persecution of Valerian in 237. Several others who, by the example of their constancy, had been moved to declare themselves Christians were put to death with them. St Gregory of Tours says<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Jos. Assemani in Calend. Univ. t. vi. pp. 317 and 368.  
<sup>2</sup> L. de Glor. Mart. c. 8 and 83.

that a numerous assembly of Christians, who were praying at their tomb soon after their martyrdom, were, by order of the prefect of Rome, walled up in the cave and buried alive. SS. Chrysanthus and Darias were interred on the Salarian Way with their companions, whose bodies were found with theirs in the reign of Constantine the Great. This part of the catacombs was long known by the name of the cemetery of SS. Chrysanthus and Darias. Their tomb was decorated by Pope Damasus, who composed an epitaph in their honour.<sup>1</sup> Their sacred remains were translated by Pope Stephen VI in 866, part into the Lateran basilic and part into the Church of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>2</sup>

### ST CRISPIN AND ST CRISPINIAN, MARTYRS (A.D. 287)

[See Tillemont, t. iv. p. 461; Bosquet, Hist. Eccl. de France, lib. v. c. 156; Le Moine, Hist. Antiqu. Soissons, Paris, 1771, t. i. p. 154. The new Paris Breviary, and Baillet from ancient Martyrologies; for the acts of these martyrs are of small authority.]

THE names of these two glorious martyrs are not less famous in France than those of the two former at Rome. They came from Rome to preach the faith in Gaul towards the middle of the third century, together with St Quintin and others. Fixing their residence at Soissons, in imitation of St Paul they instructed many in the faith of Christ, which they preached publicly in the day, at seasonable times; and, in imitation of St Paul, worked with their hands in the night, making shoes, though they are said to have been nobly born, and brothers. The infidels listened to their instructions, and were astonished at the example of their lives, especially of their charity, disinterestedness, heavenly piety, and contempt of glory and all earthly things; and the effect was the conversion of many to the Christian faith. The brothers had continued this employment several years when, the Emperor Maximian Herculeus coming into the Belgic Gaul, a complaint was lodged against them. The emperor, perhaps as much to gratify their accusers as to indulge his own superstition and give way to his savage cruelty, gave order that they should be convened before Rictius Varus, the most implacable enemy of the Christian name, whom he had first made governor of that part of Gaul, and had then advanced to the dignity of prefect of the prætorium. The martyrs were victorious over this most inhuman judge by the patience and constancy with which they bore the most cruel torments, and finished their course by the sword about the year 287. They are mentioned in the Martyrologies of St Jerom, Bede, Florus, Ado, Usuard, &c. A great church was built at Soissons in their honour in the sixth century, and St Eligius richly ornamented their sacred shrine.

<sup>1</sup> Damas. Carm. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Bosius and Aringhi Roma subterr. lib. iii. c. 24, and Anastasius the Librarian in his authentic relation of this translation.

From the example of the saints, it appears how foolish the pretences of many Christians are, who imagine the care of a family, the business of a farm or a shop, the attention which they are obliged to give to their worldly profession, are impediments which excuse them from aiming at perfection. Such, indeed, they make them; but this altogether owing to their own sloth and malice. How many saints have made these very employments the means of their perfection! St Paul made tents; SS. Crispin and Crispinian were shoemakers; the Blessed Virgin was taken up in the care of her poor cottage; Christ himself worked with his reputed father; and those saints who renounced all commerce with the world, to devote themselves totally to the contemplation of heavenly things, made mats, tilled the earth, or copied and bound good books.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 25:*

ST BONIFACE, Pope and Confessor, a priest well versed in the discipline of the Church, and advanced in years when he succeeded Zosimus, Dec. 29, 418: ST CHRYSANTHUS and his wife ST DARIAS, martyrs: ST CRISPIN and ST CRISPINIAN: ST GAUDENTIUS of Brescia, ordained Bishop by St Ambrose about 387; twenty of his sermons are extant owing to the request of a pious nobleman who, being too ill to attend, asked the saint to commit them to writing; in one he exhorts Christians to let humility and hospitality be practised in their homes: "Let the word of God and the sign of Jesus Christ (the cross) be in your hearts, on your countenances, at table, in the bath, when you go out and when you come in, in joy and in sorrow": ST JOHN OF BEVERLEY, a monk of Whitby, afterwards Archbishop of York; and, in Ireland, ST THADDEUS MACHAR, Bishop.

## OCTOBER 26

### ST EVARISTUS, POPE AND MARTYR (A.D. 112)

[See Eus. Hist. lib. iii. c. 34, lib. iv. c. 1. The first part of Anastasius's Pontifical, ascribed to Damasus; Tillemont, t. ii. p. 231. Berti, Diss. Chronol. t. ii., &c.]

ST EVARISTUS succeeded St Anacletus in the see of Rome, in the reign of Trajan, governed the church nine years, and died in 112. He is honoured with the title of martyr in the Pontificals and in most Martyrologies. The institution of cardinal priests is by some ascribed to him, because he first divided Rome into several titles or parishes, according to the Pontifical, assigning a priest to each: he also appointed seven deacons to attend the bishop. He conferred holy orders thrice in the month of December, when that ceremony was most usually performed, for which Amalarius assigns moral and mystical reasons; Mabillon and Claude de Vert<sup>1</sup> give this, that at Lent and Whitsuntide the bishops were more taken up, but were more at liberty in Advent to give due attention to this important function: for holy orders were always conferred in seasons appointed for fasting and prayer. St Evaristus was buried near St Peter's tomb, on the Vatican.

The disciples of the apostles, by assiduous meditation on heavenly things, were so swallowed up in the life to come that they seemed no

<sup>1</sup> Explic. des Cérém. Pref. p. 28.

longer inhabitants of this world but of heaven, where their thoughts and affections were placed, and whither they directed all their actions, even their necessary attention to temporal concerns. If the generality of Christians nowadays esteem and set their hearts so much on earthly goods, and so easily lose sight of eternity in the course of their actions, they are no longer animated by the spirit of the primitive saints, and are become children of this world, slaves to its vanities and to their own irregular passions. If we do not correct this disorder of our heart, and conform our interior to the spirit of Christ, we cannot be entitled to his promises.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 26:*

In the dioceses of Scotland, St BEAN, an Irishman, first Bishop of Murthlach, a see afterwards transferred to Aberdeen : St EVARISTUS, Pope and martyr : St LUCIAN and St MARCIAN, who, living in the darkness of idolatry, applied themselves to the study of the black art, but were converted to the faith on finding that their charms had no power over a Christian virgin and that evil spirits were defeated by the sign of the cross ; they were burned alive, singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving to God ere they expired in the flames.

#### OCTOBER 27

### ST FRUMENTIUS, BISHOP, CONFESSOR, APOSTLE OF ETHIOPIA (FOURTH AGE)

[See Rufinus, Hist. lib. i. c. 19 ; Theodoret, lib. i. c. 22 ; St Athan. Apol. 1, p. 696 ; Socrates, lib. i. c. 19 ; Sozomen, lib. ii. c. 24 ; Hermant, Vie de St Athanase, t. ii. p. 240 ; Tillemont, t. vii. p. 284, t. viii. p. 13 ; Montfaucon Vit. St Athan. p. 15, t. i. ; Op. St Athan. ; Job Ludolf (who died at Francfort, in 1704, and is famous for his travels, and skill in the Ethiopian and other Oriental languages), Hist. Æthiop. lib. iii. c. 7, n. 17, et Comment. in eandem Hist. p. 280 ; Le Quien, Or. Chr. t. ii. p. 643.]

A CERTAIN philosopher named Metrodorus, out of curiosity and a desire of seeing the world and improving his stock of knowledge, made several voyages, and travelled both into Persia and into farther India, which name the ancients gave to Ethiopia. At his return he presented Constantine the Great, who had then lately made himself master of the East, with a quantity of diamonds and other precious stones and curiosities, assuring that prince his collection would have been much more valuable had not Sapor, King of Persia, seized on the best part of his treasure. His success encouraged Meropius, a philosopher of Tyre, to undertake a like voyage upon the same motive. Meropius carried with him two of his nephews, Frumentius and Edesius, with whose education he was entrusted. In the course of their voyage homewards the vessel touched at a certain port to take in provisions and fresh water. The barbarians of that country, who were then at war with the Romans, stopped the ship, and put the whole crew and all the passengers to the sword except the two children who were studying their lessons under a tree at some distance. When they were found, their innocence, tender age, and beauty pleaded strongly in their favour, and moved the barbarians to compassion ; and they were carried

to the king, who resided at Axuma, formerly one of the greatest cities in the East, now a poor village in Abyssinia called Accum, filled with ruins of stately edifices, and sumptuous obelisks which seem to have been funeral monuments of the dead, though none of the inscriptions are now intelligible.<sup>1</sup> The prince was charmed with the wit and sprightliness of the two boys, took especial care of their education, and not long after made Edesius his cup-bearer, and Frumentius, who was the elder, his treasurer and secretary of state, entrusting him with all the public writings and accounts. They lived in great honour with this prince, who on his death-bed thanked them for their services, and in recompense gave them their liberty. After his demise the queen, who was left regent for her eldest son, entreated them to remain at court and assist her in the government of the state, wherein she found their fidelity, abilities, and integrity her greatest support and comfort. Frumentius had the principal management of affairs, and, desiring to promote the faith of Christ in that kingdom, engaged several Christian merchants who traded there to settle in the country, and procured them great privileges and all the conveniences for their religious worship, and by his own fervour and example strongly recommended the true religion to the infidels. When the young king, whose name was Aizan, came to age and took the reins of government into his own hands, the brothers resigned their posts and, though he invited them to stay, Edesius went back to Tyre, where he was afterwards ordained priest. But Frumentius, having nothing so much at heart as the conversion of the whole nation, took the route of Alexandria, and entreated the holy archbishop, St Athanasius, to send some pastor to that country, ripe for a conversion to the faith. St Athanasius called a synod of bishops, and by their unanimous advice ordained Frumentius himself bishop of the Ethiopians, judging no one more proper than himself to finish the work which he had begun. Frumentius, vested with this sacred character, went back to Axuma, and gained great numbers to the faith by discourses and miracles; for seldom did any nation embrace Christianity with greater ardour or defend it with greater courage. The Abyssinians honour him as the apostle of the country of the Axumites, which is the most considerable part of their empire. They also place among the saints the two kings Aizan, whom they call Abreha and Sazan, whose name in their modern language is Atzbeha. St Frumentius they call St Fremonat.

In every age from Christ down to this very time some new nations have been added to the fold of Christ, as the annals of the church show; and the apostasy of those that have forsaken the path of truth has been repaired by fresh acquisitions. This is the work of the Most High; the wonderful effect of all-powerful grace. It is owing to the divine blessing

<sup>1</sup> See Ludolf, *Hist. Æthiop.* M. Almeida, *Hist. of Higher Ethiopia*, and Thevenot.

that the heavenly seed fructifies in the hearts of men, and it is God who raises up and animates with his spirit zealous successors of the apostles, whom he vouchsafes to make his instruments in this great work. We are indebted to his gratuitous mercy for the inestimable benefit of this light of faith. If we correspond not faithfully, with fear and trembling, to so great a grace, our punishment will be so much the more dreadful.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 27 :*

ST ABBAN, Abbot in Ireland, son of Cormac, King of Leinster; trained in the monastery of Beg-erlin, he followed his uncle St Ibar in the religious life and converted a number of idolaters; ST ELESBAAN, King of Ethiopia, who in all things had no desire but to procure his people's happiness and the glory of God: ST FRUMENTIUS, Bishop and Confessor, apostle of Ethiopia: and ST OTTERAN, Bishop, a brother of St Medrain; he died in the middle of the sixth century.

## OCTOBER 28

### ST SIMON, SURNAMED THE ZEALOT, APOSTLE

[See Tillem. t. i. p. 423; also Nicetas Paphlagon. in his *Encomium Simonis Zelotæ Ap.* published by F. Combefis in *Auctar. Noviss. Bibl. Patr.* t. i. p. 408, and Combefis's remarks on the Apostles Simon and Jude, t. viii. *Bibl. Concionat.* p. 290; Jos. Assemani in *Calend. Univ. ad 10 Maij.* t. vi. p. 334.]

ST SIMON is surnamed the Canaanean or Canaanite, and the Zealot, to distinguish him from St Peter, and from St Simeon, the brother of St James the Less, and his successor in the see of Jerusalem. From the first of these surnames some have thought that St Simon was born at Cana, in Galilee: certain modern Greeks pretend that it was at his marriage that our Lord turned the water into wine. It is not to be doubted but he was a Galilean. Theodoret says, of the tribe either of Zabulon or Nepthali. Hammond and Grotius think that St Simon was called the Zealot, before his coming to Christ, because he was one of that particular sect or party among the Jews called Zealots, from a singular zeal they possessed for the honour of God and the purity of religion. A party called Zealots were famous in the war of the Jews against the Romans. They were main instruments in instigating the people to shake off the yoke of subjection; they assassinated many of the nobility and others in the streets, filled the temple itself with bloodshed and other horrible profanations, and were the chief cause of the ruin of their country. But no proof is offered by which it is made to appear that any such party existed in our Saviour's time, though some then maintained that it was not lawful for a Jew to pay taxes to the Romans. At least if any then took the name Zealots, they certainly neither followed the impious conduct nor adopted the false and inhuman maxims of those mentioned by Josephus in his history of the Jewish war against the Romans.

St Simon, after his conversion, was zealous for the honour of his Master, and exact in all the duties of the Christian religion; and showed a pious indignation toward those who professed this holy faith with their

mouths, but dishonoured it by the irregularity of their lives. No further mention appears of him in the gospels than that he was adopted by Christ into the college of the apostles. With the rest he received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, which he afterwards exercised with great zeal and fidelity. If this apostle preached in Egypt, Cyrene, and Mauritania, he returned into the East; for the Martyrologies of St Jerom, Bede, Ado, and Usuard place his martyrdom in Persia, at a city called Suanir, possibly in the country of the Suani, a people in Colchis, or a little higher in Sarmatia, then allied with the Parthians in Persia; which may agree with a passage in the Acts of St Andrew, that in the Cimmerian Bosphorus there was a tomb in a grot, with an inscription importing that Simon the Zealot was interred there. His death is said in these Martyrologies to have been procured by the idolatrous priests. Those who mention the manner of his death say he was crucified. St Peter's Church on the Vatican at Rome and the Cathedral of Toulouse are said to possess the chief portions of the relics of SS. Simon and Jude.<sup>1</sup>

### ST JUDE, APOSTLE

[See Tillemont, t. i.; Jos. Assemani, ad 19 Junij, t. vi. p. 453; Falconius, ib. p. 105; Calmet, t. ix.]

THE apostle St Jude is distinguished from the Iscariot by the surname of Thaddæus, which signifies in Syriac praising or confession (being of the same import with the Hebrew word Judas), also by that of Lebbæus, which is given him in the Greek text of St Matthew. St Jude was brother to St James the Less, as he styles himself in his epistle; likewise of St Simeon of Jerusalem, and of one Joses,<sup>2</sup> who are styled the brethren of our Lord, and were sons of Cleophas and Mary, sister to the Blessed Virgin. This apostle's kindred and relation to our Saviour exalted him not so much in his Master's eyes as his contempt of the world, the ardour of his holy zeal and love, and his sufferings for his sake. It is not known when and by what means he became a disciple of Christ, nothing having been said of him in the gospels before we find him enumerated in the catalogue of the apostles. After the last supper, when Christ promised to manifest himself to every one who should love him, St Jude asked him why he did not manifest himself to the world? By which question he seems to have expressed his expectation of a secular kingdom of the Messias. Christ by his answer satisfied him that the world is unqualified for divine manifestations, being a stranger and an enemy to what must fit souls for a fellowship with heaven; but that he would honour those who truly love him with his familiar converse, and would admit them to intimate communications of grace and favour.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Florentinius in *Martyr. St Hieron.* p. 176, Saussaye, *Mart. Gallic.* ad 28 Oct.  
<sup>2</sup> Matt. xiii. 55.

<sup>3</sup> John xiv. 24.

After our Lord's ascension and the descent of the Holy Ghost, St Jude set out, with the other great conquerors of the world and hell, to pull down the prince of darkness from his usurped throne; which this little troop undertook to effect armed only with the word of God and his Spirit. Nicephorus, Isidore, and the Martyrologies tell us that St Jude preached up and down Judea, Samaria, Idumæa, and Syria; especially in Mesopotamia. St Paulinus says<sup>1</sup> that St Jude planted the faith in Libya. This apostle returned from his missions to Jerusalem in the year 62, after the martyrdom of his brother, St James, and assisted at the election of St Simeon, who was likewise his brother.<sup>2</sup> He wrote a catholic or general epistle to all the churches of the East, particularly addressing himself to the Jewish converts, amongst whom he had principally laboured. St Peter had written to the same two epistles before this, and in the second had chiefly in view to caution the faithful against the errors of the Simonians, Nicholaits, and Gnostics. The havoc which these heresies continued to make among souls stirred up the zeal of St Jude, who sometimes copied certain expressions of St Peter,<sup>3</sup> and seems to refer to the epistles of SS. Peter and Paul as if the authors were then no more.<sup>4</sup> The heretics he describes by many strong epithets and similes, and calls them wandering meteors which seem to blaze for a while but set in eternal darkness. The source of their fall he points out by saying they are murmurers, and walk after their own lusts. The apostle puts us in mind to have always before our eyes the great obligation we lie under of incessantly building up our spiritual edifice of charity, by praying in the Holy Ghost, growing in the love of God, and imploring his mercy through Christ. From Mesopotamia St Jude travelled into Persia. Fortunatus and the western Martyrologists tell us that the apostle St Jude suffered martyrdom in Persia; the Menology of the Emperor Basil and some other Greeks say at Arat or Ararat, in Armenia, which at that time was subject to the Parthian empire, and consequently esteemed part of Persia. Many Greeks say he was shot to death with arrows: some add whilst he was tied on a cross. The Armenians at this day venerate him and St Bartholomew for the first planters of the faith among them.<sup>5</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 28:*

ST FARO, fourteenth Bishop of Meaux, who lived rather as a recluse than a courtier at the Court of King Theodobert II, employing his credit with the prince who succeeded him (Clotaire II) to protect the innocent, the orphan, and the widow, and to comfort all in distress: ST NEOT, anchorite, first adviser to King Alfred, said to have been related to him; he took the monastic habit at Glastonbury, where the king frequently visited him while he lay concealed in Somerset; our saint particularly recommended to the king the advancement of useful and sacred study, and, it is said, the foundation of our first noble University of Oxford: ST SIMON and ST JUDE, Apostles.

<sup>1</sup> St Paulin. Carm. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Eus. Hist. lib. iii. c. 11.

<sup>3</sup> See Jude 17, and 2 Pet. ii. 15, &c.

<sup>4</sup> Jude 17, referring to 2 Pet. iii. 2, 3, and 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

<sup>5</sup> See Joachim Schroder, in Thesaur. Linguae Armeni. p. 149, edit. an. 1711, Le Quien. Orient. Christian. t. i. p. 419.

OCTOBER 29

ST NARCISSUS, BISHOP OF JERUSALEM  
(SECOND CENTURY)

[From Euseb. Hist. lib. v. c. 12, 23, 25, lib. vi. c. 9, 10, 11, 12; St Jerom, De viris illustr. c. 73; Tillemont, t. iii.]

ST NARCISSUS was born towards the close of the first century, and was almost fourscore years old when he was placed at the head of the church of Jerusalem, being the thirtieth bishop of that see. Eusebius assures us that the Christians of Jerusalem preserved in his time the remembrance of several miracles which God had wrought by this holy bishop, one of which he relates as follows. One year, on Easter-eve, the deacons were unprovided with oil for the lamps in the church, necessary at the solemn divine office that day. Narcissus ordered those who had care of the lamps to bring him some water from the neighbouring wells. This being done, he pronounced a devout prayer over the water; then bade them pour it into the lamps, which they did, and it was immediately converted into oil, to the great surprise of the faithful. Some of this miraculous oil was kept there as a memorial at the time when Eusebius wrote his history. The veneration of all good men for this holy bishop could not shelter him from the malice of the wicked. Three incorrigible sinners, fearing his inflexible severity in the observance of ecclesiastical discipline, laid to his charge a detestable crime, which Eusebius does not specify. They confirmed their atrocious calumny by dreadful oaths and imprecations; one wishing he might perish by fire, another that he might be struck with a leprosy, and the third that he might lose his sight, if what they alleged was not the truth. Notwithstanding these protestations, their accusation did not find credit; and some time after the divine vengeance pursued the calumniators. The first was burnt in his house, with his whole family, by an accidental fire in the night; the second was struck with a universal leprosy; and the third, terrified by these examples, confessed the conspiracy and slander, and by the abundance of tears which he continually shed for his sins, lost his sight before his death.

Narcissus, notwithstanding the slander had made no impression on the people to his disadvantage, could not stand the shock of the bold calumny, or rather made it an excuse for leaving Jerusalem and spending some time in solitude, which had long been his wish. He spent several years undiscovered in his retreat, where he enjoyed all the happiness and advantage which a close conversation with God can bestow. That his church might not remain destitute of a pastor, the neighbouring bishops of the province after some time placed in it Pius, and after him Germanion, who dying in a short time was succeeded by Gordius. Whilst this last held the see,

Narcissus appeared again, like one from the dead. The whole body of the faithful, transported at the recovery of their holy pastor, whose innocence had been most authentically vindicated, conjured him to reassume the administration of the diocese. He acquiesced; but afterwards, bending under the weight of extreme old age, made St Alexander his coadjutor. St Narcissus continued to serve his flock, and even other churches, by his assiduous prayers and his earnest exhortations to unity and concord, as St Alexander testifies in his letter to the Arsinoites in Egypt, where he says that Narcissus was at that time, about one hundred and sixteen years old. The Roman Martyrology honours his memory on the 29th of October.

If we truly respect the church as the immaculate spouse of our Lord, we will incessantly pray for its exaltation and increase, and beseech the Almighty to give it pastors according to his own heart, like those who appeared in the infancy of Christianity. And, that no obstacle on our part may prevent the happy effects of their zeal, we should study to regulate our conduct by the holy maxims which they inculcate; we should regard them as the ministers of Christ; we should listen to them with docility and attention; we should make their faith the rule of ours, and shut our ears against the language of profane novelty.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 29:*

ST BEDE, Doctor of the Church, is honoured in the dioceses of England on this date: St CHEF, in Latin THEUDERIUS, Abbot, famed for his extraordinary gift of miracles and still more for the holiness of his life, which he spent in prayer and meditation; he died in 573: In Ireland, ST COLMAN, venerated as the patron of the diocese of Kilmacduagh: St NARCISSUS, Bishop of Jerusalem: and THE HOLY MARTYRS OF DOUAY, the many priests sent from Douay College to the English mission during the sixteenth century and who suffered martyrdom for the Catholic faith.

OCTOBER 30

ST MARCELLUS THE CENTURION, MARTYR  
(A.D. 298)

[From the authentic acts of his martyrdom in Baronius and Surius, and most correctly in Ruinart, who has published with them the short acts of St Cassian, p. 312; Tillem. t. iv. p. 575.]

THE birthday of the Emperor Maximian Herculeus was celebrated in the year 298 with extraordinary feasting and solemnity. Pompous sacrifices to the Roman gods made a considerable part of this solemnity. Marcellus, a Christian centurion or captain in the legion of Trajan, then posted in Spain, not to defile himself with taking part in those impious abominations, cast away his military belt at the head of his company, declaring aloud that he was a soldier of Jesus Christ, the eternal King. He also threw down his arms and the vine-branch, which was the mark of his post of centurion; for the Roman officers were forbid to strike a soldier with any instrument

except a vine-branch, which the centurions usually carried in their hands. The soldiers informed Anastasius Fortunatus, prefect of the legion, by whose order Marcellus was committed to prison. When the festival was over, this judge ordered Marcellus to be brought before him, and asked him what he meant by his late proceedings. Marcellus said, "When you celebrated the emperor's festival on the 12th before the calends of August (the day on which Maximian had been declared Cæsar), I said aloud that I was a Christian, and could serve no other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Fortunatus told him that it was not in his power to connive at his rashness, and that he was obliged to lay his case before the Emperor Maximian and Constantius Cæsar. Marcellus was sent under a strong guard to Aurelian Agricolaus, vicar to the prefect of the prætorium, who was then at Tangier, in Africa. Agricolaus asked him whether he had really done as the judge's letter set forth; and, upon his confessing the fact, the vicar passed sentence of death upon him for desertion and impiety, as he called his action. St Marcellus was forthwith led to execution and beheaded on the 30th of October. His relics were afterwards translated from Tangier to Leon, in Spain, and are kept in a rich shrine in the chief parish church in that city, of which he is the titular saint.

We justly honour the martyrs, whom God himself honours. Martyrdom is the most heroic act of divine love, and the most perfect and entire sacrifice man can make of himself to God. Of all the goods of this life man has nothing more precious and dear than his life and honour. And what stronger proof can he give of his fidelity to the law of God than to embrace with joy an ignominious and cruel death rather than consent to sin? God proportions his rewards and crowns to the measure of our sufferings and love for him. How great, then, is the glory, how abundant the recompense which attends the martyrs! They rejoiced to see their torments redoubled manifold, because they had before their eyes the incomparably greater increase of grace, divine love, and eternal glory. If we shrink under the least sufferings, it is plain our faith and our idea of everlasting bliss must be very weak, and our love faint and imperfect.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 30:*

ST ALPHONSUS RODRIGUEZ, S.J., 1531-1617: ST ASTERIUS, Bishop of Amasea in Pontus, a father of the Church who, in early life, pleaded at the bar until the love of God continually exhorting him, he devoted himself to the spiritual service of his neighbours; his sermons paint avarice and luxury in their true deformity, and show charity to the poor to be his own favourite virtue. Writing on relics, he says, "the martyrs defend the Church as soldiers guard a citadel": ST GERMANUS, Bishop of Capua, sent by Pope Hormisdas to put an end to the Oriental schism of forty years; St Bennet is said to have seen this saint in a vision at the hour of his death, carried by angels to eternal bliss (about 540): and ST MARCELLUS THE CENTURION, martyr.

OCTOBER 31

ST QUINTIN, MARTYR  
(A.D. 287)

[From his acts in Surius, written in a good style, before St Eligius's time, but later than Nestorius. The author assures us that he compiled them from a history written by one who was present at the first translation of the martyr's relics, fifty-five years after his death. But the author has added certain circumstances from popular traditions, with a *fertur*; which are not of equal authority. Other acts of St Quintin, but of an inferior stamp, are given us by Claude Hemere, in his History of the Town of St Quintin's. See Tillemont, t. iv. pp. 433, 436, 700.]

ST QUINTIN was a Roman, descended of a senatorial family, and is called by his historian the son of Zeno. Full of zeal for the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and burning with a holy desire to make his powerful name and the mysteries of his love and mercy known among the infidels, he left his country, renounced all prospects of preferment, and, attended by St Lucian of Beauvais, made his way to Gaul. They preached the faith together in that country till they reached Amiens, in Picardy, where they parted. Lucian went to Beauvais, and having sown the seeds of divine faith in the hearts of many, received the crown of martyrdom in that city. St Quintin stayed at Amiens, endeavouring by his prayers and labours to make that country a portion of our Lord's inheritance. God made him equally powerful in words and works, and his discourses were authorized and strongly recommended by great numbers of miracles, and illustrated and enforced by a most holy and mortified life. The reward of his charitable labours was the crown of martyrdom, which he received in the beginning of the reign of Maximian Herculeus, who was associated in the empire by Diocletian, in the year 286. Maximian made Rictius Varus prefect of the *prætorium*, whose hatred of the Christian religion has stored the Martyrology with lists of many illustrious martyrs. Varus seems to have resided at Triers, the metropolis of the Belgic Gaul; but, making a progress into the Second Gaul, when he was near Soissons he had intelligence of the great progress the Christian faith had made at Amiens, and resolved to cut him off who was the author of this great change. When he arrived at Amiens, he ordered St Quintin to be seized, thrown into prison, and loaded with chains. The next day the holy preacher was brought before the prefect, who assailed his constancy with promises and threats; and, finding him proof against both, ordered him to be whipped unmercifully and then confined to a close dungeon without the liberty of receiving either comfort or assistance from the faithful. The holy martyr, strengthened by Him whose cause he defended, remained superior to all the cruel arts of his barbarous persecutor, and preserved a perfect tranquillity

of mind in the midst of such torments as filled the spectators with horror.

When Rictius Varus left Amiens he commanded Quintin to be conducted to the territory of the Veromandui, whither he was directing his course in his return. The capital of that country was called Augusta Veromanduorum. In this city of the Veromandui the prefect made fresh attacks upon the champion of Christ with threats and promises; and being ashamed to see himself vanquished by his courage and virtue, caused his body to be pierced with two iron wires from the neck to the thighs, and iron nails to be struck under his nails, and in his flesh in many places, particularly into his skull; and, lastly, his head to be cut off. This was executed on the 31st of October in 287. The martyr's body was watched by the soldiers till night, and then thrown into the river Somme; but it was recovered by the Christians some days after, and buried on a mountain near the town; fifty-five years after, it was discovered by Eusebia, a devout lady, and a certain blind woman recovered her sight by the sacred relics.<sup>1</sup> The knowledge of the place was again lost in the persecution of Julian the Apostate, though a chapel which was built near it remained, when, in the beginning of the year 641, St Eligius, Bishop of Noyon and the Vermandois, caused the holy relics to be sought; and when they were discovered, together with the great nails with which the body had been pierced, he distributed these nails, the teeth, and hair in other places, and inclosed the rest of the sacred treasure in a rich shrine of his own work, which he placed behind the high altar, as St Owen relates in his life. A new stately church of St Quintin was built in the reign of Lewis Debonnaire, and another translation of the relics was made on the 25th of October 825. They were removed to Laon for fear of the Normans, but brought back on the 30th of October 885, and are still kept in the great church, which was in the hands of monks from the time of Ebertran, the first abbot, till these were afterwards dispersed by the inroads of the Normans. In the following age, secular canons were put in possession of this famous church.

Martyrdom, when we are called to it, is an homage we owe to God, and a debt due to faith and religion. How great is the honour and happiness for a poor mortal man and a poor sinner to lay down his mean miserable life for Him who, out of infinite love for us, gave his most precious life! Martyrs are holocausts offered to the divine love and glory. They are witnesses, as the word imports in the original Greek, *bearing testimony* to the infinite power and goodness of God, in which they place an entire confidence, and to the truth of his holy revealed faith, which they confirm with their blood. No testimony can

<sup>1</sup> *Act. Mart. et St Greg. Turon. de Gl. Mart. c. 73.*

be more authentic, more glorious to God, more edifying to the faithful, or more convincing to infidels. It is by the constancy of martyrs that our holy religion is established.

*The following feasts are celebrated on October 31:*

ST FOILLAN, one of three brothers, all saints, and sons of FYLTAN, King of Munster; the others were St Ultan and St Fursey; after the death of Fursey, Foillan and Ultan journeyed to Nivelle, where St Gertrude governed a great nunnery; she gave to St Ultan territory to build a hospital and religious house, but detained St Foillan to instruct her nuns and preach to the people around; this saint was killed by robbers or infidels while going to visit his brother in a forest in Hainault: ST QUINTIN, martyr: ST WOLFGANG, Bishop of Ratisbon, a native of Suabia, educated in a monastery that was a flourishing school of learning and piety; later, ordained by St Ulric and, developing the apostolic spirit, he went to preach the faith to the Hungarians; as a bishop he retained the monastic habit and practised all the austerities of a religious life; canonized by Pope Leo IX in 1052 on the testimony of many miracles: on this date is kept the VIGIL OF ALL SAINTS, and on the last Sunday in October is celebrated the FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING, initiated in 1925 by Pius XI, who based his decision on "the witness of holy Scripture, the witness of the liturgy and the witness of theology."

NOVEMBER 1

ALL SAINTS

THE church in this great festival honours all the saints reigning together in glory; first, to give thanks to God for the graces and crowns of all his elect: secondly, to excite ourselves to a fervent imitation of their virtues by considering the holy example of so many faithful servants of God of all ages, sexes, and conditions, and by contemplating the inexpressible and eternal bliss which they already enjoy, and to which we are invited: thirdly, to implore the divine mercy through this multitude of powerful intercessors: fourthly, to repair any failures or sloth in not having duly honoured God in his saints on their particular festivals, and to glorify him in the saints which are unknown to us, or for which no particular festivals are appointed. Therefore our fervour on this day ought to be such that it may be a reparation of our sloth in all the other feasts of the year; they being all comprised in this one solemn commemoration, which is an image of that eternal great feast which God himself continually celebrates in heaven with all his saints, whom we humbly join in praising his adorable goodness for all his mercies, particularly for all treasures of grace which he has most munificently heaped upon them. In this and all other festivals of the saints God is the only object of supreme worship, and the whole of that inferior veneration which is paid to the saints is directed to give sovereign honour to God alone, whose gifts their graces are: and our addresses to them are only petitions to holy fellow creatures for the assistance of their prayers to God for us. When, therefore, we honour the saints, in them and through them we honour God, and Christ, true God and true man, the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind, the King of the Saints, and the source of all their sanctity and glory. In his blood they have washed their robes: from him they derive all their purity, whiteness, and lustre. We consider their virtues as copies taken from him, the great Original, as streams from his fountain, or as images of his virtues produced by the effusion of his spirit and grace in them. His divine life is their great exemplar and prototype, and in the characteristical virtues of each saint some of his most eminent virtues are particularly set forth: his hidden life in the solitude of the anchorites; his spotless purity in the virgins; his patience or charity in some; his divine zeal in others; in them all in some degree his plenitude of all virtue and sanctity. Nor are the virtues of the saints only transcripts and copies of

the life or spirit of Christ; they are also the fruit of his redemption; entirely his gifts and graces. And when we honour the saints we honour and praise him who is the Author of all their good; so that all festivals of saints are instituted to honour God and our Blessed Redeemer.

In all feasts of saints, especially in this solemn festival of All Saints, it ought to be the first part of our devotion to praise and thank God for the infinite goodness he has displayed in favour of his elect. A primary and most indispensable homage we owe to God is that of praise, the first act of love and complacency in God and his adorable perfections. Hence the Psalms, the most perfect and inspired model of devotions, repeat no sentiments so frequently or with so much ardour as those of divine adoration and praise. This is the uninterrupted sweet employment of the blessed in heaven to all eternity; and the contemplation of the divine love and other perfections is a perpetual incentive inflaming them continually afresh in it, so that they cannot cease pouring forth all their affections and exhausting all their powers; and conceive every moment new ardour in this happy function of pure love. So many holy solitaries of both sexes in this life have renounced all commerce and pleasures of the world, to devote themselves wholly to the mixed exercises of praise and love, and of compunction and humble supplication. In these, all servants of God find their spiritual strength, refreshment, advancement, delight, and joy. To aid our weakness and supply our insufficiency in magnifying the infinite Lord of all things, and exalting his glory, we have recourse to the spotless victim, the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, put into our hands for us to offer a holocaust of infinite price, equal to the majesty of the Godhead. We also rejoice in the infinite glory which God possesses in himself, and from himself. Deriving from himself infinite greatness and infinite happiness, he stands not in need of our goods, and can receive no accession from our homages as to internal glory; in which consists his sovereign bliss. But there is an external glory which he receives from the obedience and praise of his creatures, which, though it increase not his happiness, is nevertheless indispensably due to him, and an external homage with which all beings are bound to sound forth his sovereign power and sanctity. Nor do we owe him this only for his own greatness and glory, which he possesses in himself, but also for the goodness, justice, wisdom, and power which he manifests in all his works. Compounds of the divine mercies as we are, we are bound to give to God incessant thanks for all the benefits, both in the order of nature and of grace, which he has gratuitously conferred upon us. We owe him also an acknowledgment of praise and thanksgiving for all his creatures from the beginning, and for all the wonders he has wrought in them or in their behalf. For this the psalmist and the prophets so often rehearse his mighty works, and invite all beings to magnify his holy name for them.

It is in his saints that he is wonderful above all his other works.<sup>1</sup> For them was this world framed: for their sakes is it preserved and governed. In the revolution of states and empires, and in the extirpation or conservation of cities and nations, God has his elect chiefly in view. By the secret unerring order of his most tender and all-wise providence, "All things work together for good to them."<sup>2</sup> For their sake will God shorten the evil days in the last period of the world.<sup>3</sup> The justification of a sinner, the sanctification of a soul, is the fruit of numberless stupendous works, the most wonderful exertion of infinite goodness and mercy, and of Almighty power. The creation of the universe out of nothing is a work which can bear no comparison with the salvation of a soul through the redemption of Christ. And with what infinite condescension and tenderness does the Lord of all things watch over every one of his elect! With what unspeakable invisible gifts does he adorn them! To how sublime and astonishing a dignity does he exalt them, making them companions of his blessed angels, and co-heirs with his Divine Son! Weak and frail men, plunged in the gulf of sin, he, by his omnipotent arm and by the most adorable and stupendous mercy, has rescued from the slavery of the devil and jaws of hell; has cleansed them from all stains; and by the ornaments of his grace has rendered them most beautiful and glorious. And with what honour has he crowned them! To what an immense height of immortal glory has he raised them! and by what means? His grace conducted them by humility, patience, charity, and penance through ignominies, torments, pains, sorrows, mortifications, and temptations to joy and bliss, by the cross to their crowns. Lazarus, who here below was covered with ulcers, and denied the crumbs of bread which fell from the rich man's table, is now seated on a throne of glory, and replenished with delights which neither eye hath seen nor ear hath heard. Poor fishermen, here the outcast of the world, are made assessors with Christ in judging the world at the last day; so great will be the glory and honour with which they will be placed on thrones at his right hand, and bear testimony to the equity of the sentence which he will pronounce against the wicked. "Thy friends are exceedingly honoured, O God."<sup>4</sup> These glorious citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem he has chosen out of all the tribes of the children of Israel,<sup>5</sup> and out of all nations, without any distinction of Greek or barbarian; persons of all ages, showing there is no age which is not ripe or fit for heaven; and out of all states and conditions; in the throne amidst the pomp of worldly grandeur; in the cottage; in the army; in trade; in the magistracy; clergymen, monks, virgins, married persons, widows, slaves, and freemen. In a word, what state is there that has not been honoured with its saints? And they were all made saints by the very

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxvii. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. cxxxviii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 28.

<sup>5</sup> Apoc. vii. 3, 4, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Mark xiii. 20.

occupations of their states, and by the ordinary occurrences of life; prosperity and adversity; health and sickness; honour and contempt; riches and poverty; all which they made the means of their sanctification by the constant exercise of patience, humility, meekness, charity, resignation, and devotion. This is the “manifold grace of God.”<sup>1</sup> We are called upon with the whole church militant on earth to join the church triumphant in heaven in praising and thanking our most merciful God for the graces and glory he has bestowed on his saints. Shall we not, at the same time, earnestly conjure him to exert his omnipotence and mercy in raising us from all our spiritual miseries and sins, healing the disorders of our souls, and conducting us through the paths of true penance to the happy company of his saints, to which he has vouchsafed most graciously to invite us?

Nothing can more powerfully incite us to aspire with all our strength to the incomparable happiness and blessed company of the saints than their example. Nor can anything more strongly inflame us with holy emulation than the constant meditation on that glory of which they are even now possessed, and in which they earnestly wait for us to join them. How does their immortality inspire us with a contempt of the inconstant, perishable, and false honours of this world!

Do we complain of our frailty? The saints were made of the same mould with us. But being sensible of their weakness, they were careful to retrench all incentives of their passions, to shun all dangerous occasions of sin, to ground themselves in the most profound humility, and to strengthen themselves by the devout use of the sacraments, prayer, an entire distrust in themselves, and other means of grace. It was by the strength they received from above, not by their own, that they triumphed over both their domestic and their external enemies. We have the same succours by which they were victorious. The blood of Christ was shed for us as it was for them; the all-powerful grace of our Redeemer is not wanting to us, but the failure is in ourselves. If difficulties start up, if temptations affright us, if enemies stand in our way like monsters and giants, which seem ready to devour us,<sup>2</sup> let us not lose courage, but redouble our earnestness, crying out with Josue,<sup>3</sup> “The Lord is with us. Why do we fear?” If the world pursue us, let us remember that the saints fought against it in all its shapes. If our passions are violent, Jesus has furnished us with arms to tame them and hold them in subjection. How furious assaults have many saints sustained in which they were supported by victorious grace! Of this many are instances who had had the misfortune formerly to have fortified their passions by criminal habits. St Austin, after having been engaged many years in irregular courses, conquered them. How many other holy penitents broke stronger chains than ours can be, by courageously using violence upon themselves, and

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Num. xiii. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Num. xiv. 9.

became eminent saints! Can we, then, for shame think the difficulties we apprehend an excuse for our sloth which, when we resolutely encounter them, we shall find to be more imaginary than real? Shall we shrink at the thought of self-denial, penance, or prayer? Shall not we dare to undertake or to do what numberless happy troupes of men and women have done and daily do? So many tender virgins, so many youths of the most delicate complexion and education, so many princes and kings, so many of all ages, constitutions, and conditions have courageously walked before us! "Canst not thou do what these and those persons of both sexes have done?" said St Austin to himself. Their example wonderfully inspires us with resolution, and silences all the pretexts of pusillanimity. To set before our eyes a perfect model of the practice of true virtue, the Son of God became man and lived amongst us. That we may not say the example of a God-man is too exalted for us, we have that of innumerable saints who, inviting us to take up the sweet yoke of Christ, say to us with St Paul, "Be you imitators of me, even as I am of Christ."<sup>1</sup> They were men in all respects like ourselves, so that our sloth and cowardice can have no excuse. They form a cloud of witnesses, demonstrating to us, from their own experience, that the practice of Christian perfection is easy and sweet. They will rise up and condemn the wicked at the last day, covering them with inexpressible confusion; "Thou raisest up thy witnesses against me."<sup>2</sup>

There is but one gospel, but one Redeemer and divine Legislator, Jesus Christ, and but one heaven. No other road can lead us thither but that which he has traced out to us: the rule of salvation laid down by him is invariable. It is a most pernicious and false persuasion, either that Christians in the world are not bound to aim at perfection, or that they may be saved by a different path from that of the saints. The torrent of example in the world imperceptibly instils this error into the minds of many, that there is a kind of middle way of going to heaven; and under this notion, because the world does not live up to the gospel, they bring the gospel down to the level or standard of the world. All Christians are commanded to labour to become holy and perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect, and to bear his image, and resemble him by spotless sanctity, that we may be his children. We are obliged by the law of the gospel to die to ourselves by the extinction of inordinate self-love in our hearts, by the crucifixion of the old man, and the mastery and regulation of our passions. It is no less indispensable an injunction laid on us than on them, that we be animated with, and live by, the Spirit of Christ; that is, the spirit of sincere and perfect humility, meekness, charity, patience, piety, and all other divine virtues. These are the conditions under which Christ makes us his promises and enrols us among his children, as is

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Job. x. 17.

manifest from all the divine instructions which he has given us in the gospel, and those which the apostles have left us in their inspired writings. Here is no distinction made between the apostles, or clergymen, or religious and secular persons. The former, indeed, take upon themselves certain stricter obligations, as means of accomplishing more easily and more perfectly these lessons; but the law of sanctity and of a disengagement of the heart from the world is general, and binds all the followers of Christ, all who can be entitled to inherit his promises. Now, what marks do we find in the lives of Christians of this crucifixion of their passions, and of the Spirit of Christ reigning in their hearts and actions? Do not detraction, envy, jealousy, anger, antipathies, resentments, vanity, love of the world, ambition, and pride discover themselves in their conversation and conduct, and as strongly as in the very heathens? It is in vain to plead that these are sins of surprise. It is manifest that they are sins of habit, and that these passions hold the empire in their hearts. An interior disposition of charity, meekness, and other virtues would give a very contrary turn to their conversation and behaviour, and would make them like the saints, humble, peaceable, mild, obliging to all, and severe only to themselves.

What, then, is the first duty of one who desires to become a disciple of Christ? This is a most important point which very few sufficiently attend to. The first thing which a Christian is bound to study is, in what manner he is to die to himself and his passions. This is the preliminary article or condition which Christ requires of him before he can be admitted into his divine school. For this such a practice of the exterior mortification of the senses is necessary that they may be kept under due government; but the interior denial of the will and restraint of the passions is the most essential part, and is chiefly effected by extirpating pride, vanity, revenge, and other irregular passions, and planting in the heart the most perfect spirit of humility, meekness, patience, and charity.

Can anyone pretend that世俗s can be excused from the obligation of subduing their passions, retrenching sin, and aiming at perfection? Are they not bound to save their souls—that is, to be saints? God, who commands all to aim at perfection, yet whose will it is at the same time that to live in the world should be the general state of mankind, is not contrary to himself. That all places in the world should be filled is God's express command; also that the duties of every station in it be faithfully complied with.<sup>1</sup> He requires not, then, that men abandon their employs in the world, but that by a disengagement of heart and religious motive or intention, they sanctify them. Thus has every lawful station in the world been adorned with saints. God obliges not men in the world to leave their business; on the contrary, he commands them diligently to discharge every branch of their temporal stewardship. The tradesman is

bound to attend to his shop, the husbandman to his tillage, the servant to his work, the master to the care of his household and estates. These are essential duties which men owe to God, to the public, to themselves, and to their children and families; a neglect of which, whatever else they do, will suffice to damn them. But then, they must always reserve to themselves leisure for spiritual and religious duties; they must also sanctify all the duties of their profession. This is to be done by a good intention. It is the motive of our actions upon which, in a moral and Christian sense, the greatest part, or sometimes the whole, of every action depends. This is the soul of our actions; this determines them, forms their character, and makes them virtues or vices. If avarice, vainglory, sensuality, or the like inordinate inclinations influence the course of our actions, it is evident to what class they belong; and this is the poison which infects even the virtuous part of those who have never studied to mortify their passions.

But slothful Christians allege the difficulty of this precept; they think that perfectly to die to themselves is a severe injunction. God forbid anyone should widen the path which the Saviour of the world has declared to be narrow. It is doubtless difficult and requires resolution and courage. Who can think that heaven will cost him nothing which cost all the saints so much? What temporal advantage is gained without pains? The bread of labourers, the riches of misers, the honours of the ambitious, cost much anxiety and pains; yet, what empty shadows, what racking tortures, what real miseries are the enjoyment which worldlings purchase at so dear a rate! But it is only to our inordinate appetites (which we are bound to mortify, and the mortification of which will bring us liberty and true joy) that the doctrine of self-denial appears harsh. And its fruits in the soul are the reign of divine love; and the sweet "peace of God which passeth all understanding,"<sup>1</sup> which springs from the government of the passions, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in the soul, and is attended with a pure and holy joy which fills the whole capacity of the heart, and which the whole world can never take from the servant of God.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 1:*

ALL SAINTS, on which the Church honours all the saints reigning together in glory: St AUSTREMONIUS, who planted the faith in Auvergne in the third century: St BENIGNUS, priest and martyr, apostle of Burgundy: St CÆSARIUS, martyred because he protested against a young man sacrificing his life to Apollo; a Christian priest was, with him, put into a sack and cast into the sea (300): St FORTUNATUS, Bishop: St HAROLD VI, King of Denmark, martyr: St MARCELLUS, Bishop of Paris in the fourth age: and St MARY, a humble slave to Tertullius; she prayed much and fasted frequently, especially on all idolatrous festivals; she was cruelly tortured, but she died a happy martyr.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iv. 7.

NOVEMBER 2

## ALL SOULS; OR, THE COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

By purgatory, no more is meant by Catholics than a middle state of souls, viz. of purgation from sin by temporary chastisements, or a punishment of some sin inflicted after death, which is not eternal.<sup>1</sup> As to the place, manner, or kind of these sufferings, nothing has been defined by the church; and all who with Dr Deacon except against this doctrine, on account of the circumstance of a material fire,<sup>2</sup> quarrel about a mere scholastic question in which a person is at liberty to choose either side. This doctrine of a state of temporary punishment after death for some sins is interwoven with the fundamental articles of the Christian religion. For, as eternal torments are the portion of all souls which depart this life under the guilt of mortal sin, and everlasting bliss of those who die in the state of grace, so it is an obvious consequence that among the latter many souls may be defiled with lesser stains, and cannot enter immediately into the joy of the Lord. Repentance may be sincere, though something be wanting to its perfection; some part of the debt which the penitent owes to the divine justice may remain uncancelled, as appears from several instances mentioned in the holy scriptures, as of David,<sup>3</sup> of the Israelites in the wilderness,<sup>4</sup> of Moses and Aaron,<sup>5</sup> and of the prophet slain by a lion,<sup>6</sup> which debt is to be satisfied for either in this life or in the next. Certainly, some sins are venial, which deserve not eternal death; yet, if not effaced by condign penance in this world, must be punished in the next. Every wound is not mortal; nor does every small offence totally destroy friendship. The scriptures frequently mention these venial sins, from which ordinarily the just are not exempt, who certainly would not be just if these lesser sins, into which men easily fall by surprise, destroyed grace in them, or if they fell from charity.<sup>7</sup> Yet the smallest sin excludes a soul from heaven so long as it is not blotted out. Nothing which is not perfectly pure and spotless can stand before God, who is infinite purity and sanctity, and cannot bear the sight of the least iniquity. Whence it is said of heaven, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything defiled."<sup>8</sup> It is the great employment of all the saints or pious persons here below by rigorous self-examination to try their actions and thoughts, and narrowly to look into all the doublings and recesses of their hearts; continually to accuse and judge themselves, and by daily tears of compunction, works of penance, and the use of the

<sup>1</sup> See the Council of Trent, Sess. 25; Pope Pius IV's Creed; Bossuet's Exposition; and Catech. of Montp.

<sup>2</sup> Deacon, Tr. on Purgatory.

<sup>4</sup> Num. xiv. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Num. xx. 24; Deut. xxxii. 51.

<sup>7</sup> Prov. xiv. 16; James iii. 2; Matt. xii. 36; Matt. vi. 12.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Kings (or Samuel) xiv. 10 and 13, ib. xxiv.

<sup>5</sup> 3 Kings (or 1 Kings) xliii.

<sup>6</sup> 3 Kings (or 1 Kings) xliii.

<sup>8</sup> Apoc. xxi. 27.

sacraments, to correct all secret disorders, and wipe away all filth which their affections may contract. Yet who is there who keeps so constant a guard upon his heart and whole conduct as to avoid all insensible self-deceptions? Who is there upon whose heart no inordinate attachments steal; into whose actions no sloth, remissness, or some other irregularity ever insinuates itself? Or whose compunction and penance is so humble and clear-sighted, so fervent and perfect, that no lurking disorder of his whole life escapes him, and is not perfectly washed away by the sacred blood of Christ, applied by these means or conditions to the soul? Who has perfectly subdued and regulated all his passions, and grounded his heart in perfect humility, meekness, charity, piety, and all other virtues, so as to bear the image of God in himself, or to be holy and perfect, even as he is, without spot? Perhaps scarce in any moment of our lives is our intention or motive so fervent, and so pure or exempt from the least imperceptible sinister influence and mixture of sloth, self-complacency, or other inordinate affection or passion; and all other ingredients or circumstances of our action so perfect and holy, as to be entirely without failure in the eyes of God, which nothing can escape. Assiduous conversation with heaven, constant watchfulness, self-denial, and a great purity of heart, with the assistance of an extraordinary grace, give the saints a wonderful light to discover and correct the irregularities of their affections. Yet it is only by the fervent spirit and practice of penance that they can be purified in the sight of God.

The Blessed Virgin was preserved by an extraordinary grace from the least sin in the whole tenor of her life and actions; but, without such a singular privilege, even the saints are obliged to say that they sin daily; but they forthwith rise again by living in constant compunction and watchfulness over themselves.<sup>1</sup> Venial sins of surprise are readily effaced by penance, as we hope of the divine mercy; even such sins which are not discovered by us are virtually repented of by a sincere compunction, if it be such as effectually destroys them. Venial sins of malice, or committed with full deliberation, are of a different nature, far more grievous and fatal, usually of habit, and lead even to mortal sin. Those Christians who shun these more wilful offences, yet are not very watchful over themselves, and labour not very strenuously in subduing all their passions, have just reason to fear that some inordinate affections taint almost the whole body of their actions, without being sufficiently repented of. And the very best Christians must always tremble at the thought of the dreadful account they have to give to God for every idle word or thought. No one can be justified before God but by his pure and free mercy. Yet no man will say that a venial sin, which destroys not sanctifying grace, will be punished with eternal torments. Hence there must be a relaxation of some sin in the world to

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxiv. 16.

come, as is sufficiently implied, according to the remark of St Austin, in these words of Christ, where he says that the sin against the Holy Ghost "shall not be forgotten in this world, nor in the world to come."<sup>1</sup> Christ, exhorting us to agree with our adversary or accuser by appeasing our conscience, mentions a place of punishment out of which souls shall be delivered, though not before they shall have paid the last farthing.<sup>2</sup>

The church of Christ is composed of three different parts: the triumphant in heaven, the militant on earth, and the patient or suffering in purgatory. Our charity embraces all the members of Christ. Our love for him engages and binds us to his whole body, and teaches us to share both the miseries and afflictions, and the comforts and blessings of all that are comprised in it. The communion of saints which we profess in our creed implies a communication of certain good works and offices, and a mutual intercourse among all the members of Christ. This we maintain with the saints in heaven by thanking and praising God for their triumphs and crowns, imploring their intercession, and receiving the succours of their charitable solicitude and prayers for us; likewise with the souls in purgatory, by soliciting the divine mercy in their favour. Nor does it seem to be doubted but they, as they are in a state of grace and charity, pray also for us; though the church never addresses public suffrages to them, not being warranted by primitive practice and tradition so to do. That to pray for the faithful departed is a pious and wholesome charity and devotion is proved clearly from the Old Testament, and from the doctrine and practice of the Jewish synagogue. The baptisms or legal purifications which the Jews sometimes used for the dead demonstrate their belief that the dead receive spiritual succours from the devotion of the living.<sup>3</sup> In the second book of the Machabees<sup>4</sup> it is related that Judas, the Machabee, sent twelve thousand ducats of silver to the temple for sacrifices to be offered for the dead, "thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. It is therefore a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." This book is ranked among the canonical scriptures by the apostolical canons, Tertullian, St Cyprian, St Hilary, St Ambrose, St Austin, the third council of Carthage, &c. Some ancients call it apocryphal, meaning that it was not in the Hebrew canon compiled by Esdras, it being writ after his time; and Origen and St Jerom, who give it that epithet, sometimes quoted it as of divine authority. The Catholic church admits the deuterocanonical books of those which were compiled after the time of Esdras as written equally by divine inspiration. If some among the ancients doubted of them before tradition in this point had been examined and cleared, several parts of the New Testament which are admitted by

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 32; St Aug. lib. xxi. de Civ. Dei, c. 13.  
<sup>3</sup> 1 Co. xv. 29; Eccl. vii. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. v. 27.  
<sup>4</sup> 2 Mac. xii. 43, 46.

Protestants have been no less called in question. Protestants, who at least allow this book a historical credit, must acknowledge this to have been the belief and practice of the most virtuous and zealous high-priest, of all the priests and doctors attached to the service of the temple, and of the whole Jewish nation; and a belief and custom which our blessed Redeemer nowhere reprehended in them.

The faith and practice of the Christian church from the beginning is manifest from the writings of the primitive fathers. In all ancient liturgies, or masses, express mention is made of prayer and sacrifice for the dead. In the Apostolical Constitutions is extant a very ancient fragment of a liturgy, from which Grabe, Hicks, and Deacon borrow many things for their new models of primitive liturgies, and which Whiston pretended to rank among the canonical scriptures. In it occurs a prayer for the dead: "Let us pray for those who are departed in peace."<sup>1</sup> There is no liturgy used by any sect of Oriental Christians, though some have been separated from the communion of the church ever since the fifth or sixth centuries, in which prayer for the dead does not occur.<sup>2</sup> The most ancient fathers frequently speak of the offering the holy sacrifice of the altar for the faithful departed. Tertullian, the oldest among the Latin Christian writers, mentioning certain apostolical traditions, says, "We make yearly offerings (or sacrifices) for the dead, and for the feasts of the martyrs."<sup>3</sup> He says "that a widow prays for the soul of her deceased husband, and begs repose for him, and his company in the first resurrection, and offers (sacrifice) on the anniversary days of his death. For if she does not these things, she has, as much as lies in her, divorced him."<sup>4</sup> St Cyprian mentions the usual custom of celebrating sacrifice for every deceased Christian.<sup>5</sup> Nor can it be said that he speaks in the same manner of martyrs. The distinction he makes is evident: <sup>6</sup> "It is one thing to be cast into prison not to be released till the last farthing is paid, and another thing through the ardour of faith immediately to attain to the reward; it is very different by long punishment for sin to be cleansed a long time by fire, and to have purged away all sin by suffering." St Chrysostom reckons it amongst the dreadful obligations of a priest "that he is the intercessor to God for the sins both of the living and the dead."<sup>7</sup> St Clement of Alexandria, who flourished in the year 200, says that by punishment after death men must expiate every the least sin before they can enter heaven.<sup>8</sup> The vision of St Perpetua is related by St Austin, and in her acts.<sup>9</sup> Origen, in many places,<sup>10</sup> and Lactantius<sup>11</sup> teach at large that all souls are purged by the punishment

<sup>1</sup> Constit. Apost. lib. viii. c. 13.

<sup>2</sup> See Le Brun, Litrur.

<sup>3</sup> Lib. de Cor. c. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Lib. de Monog. c. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. x, Ed. Oxon. See Fleury, t. ii. p. 273.

<sup>6</sup> Ep. Cypr. Ep. ad Antonian. Pam. et Baluzio 52, Fello 55.

<sup>7</sup> De Sacerd. lib. vi. p. 424 ed. Montfaucon.

<sup>8</sup> Strom. lib. vii. pp. 794, 865.

<sup>9</sup> See St Aug. Serm. 280, p. 1134; her Life, March 7, and Orsi Diss. de Actis SS. Perpet. et

<sup>10</sup> Felicit.

<sup>10</sup> Lib. v. contra Cels. p. 242, Hom. 28, in Num. Hom. 6 et 8, in Exod., &c.

<sup>11</sup> Lactant. lib. vii. Instit. c. 21.

of fire before they enter into bliss, unless they are so pure as not to stand in need of it.

To omit others, St Austin expounds those words of the thirty-seventh psalm, " Rebuke me not in thy fury," of hell; and those which follow, " Neither chastise me in thy wrath," of purgatory, as follows, " That you purify me in this life, and render me such that I may not stand in need of that purging fire."<sup>1</sup> In his *Enchiridion*<sup>2</sup> he says, " Nor is it to be denied that the souls of the departed are relieved by the piety of their living friends, when the sacrifice of the Mediator is offered for them, or alms are given in the church. But these things are profitable to those who, whilst they lived, deserved that they might avail them. There is a life so good as not to require them; and there is another so wicked that after death it can receive no benefit from them. When, therefore, the sacrifices of the altar or alms are offered for all Christians, for the very good they are thanksgivings; they are propitiations for those who are not very bad; for the very wicked, they are some kind of comfort to the living." This father teaches that a funeral pomp and monument are comforts of the living, but no succour of the dead; but that prayer, sacrifices, and alms relieve the departed.<sup>3</sup> He repeats often that sacrifice is offered in thanksgiving to God for martyrs, but never for their repose. " It is an injury," says he, " to pray for a martyr, to whose prayers we ought to be ourselves recommended."<sup>4</sup> And again, " You know in what place (of the liturgy) the martyrs are named. The church prays not for them. She justly prays for other deceased persons, but prays not for the martyrs, but rather recommends herself to their prayers." This he often repeats in other places. St Austin<sup>5</sup> and St Epiphanius<sup>6</sup> relate that when Aërius, an impious Arian priest, denied suffrages for the dead, this heresy was condemned by the universal church. How earnestly St Monica on her death-bed begged the sacrifices and prayers of the church after her departure, and how warmly St Austin recommended the souls of his parents to the prayers of others, is related in their lives.<sup>7</sup>

The like earnest desire we discover in all ancient Christians and saints. St Ephrem, in his testament, entreats his friends to offer for him, after his departure, alms, prayers, and oblations (or masses), especially on the thirtieth day.<sup>8</sup> St Athanasius tells Constantius that he had prayed earnestly for the soul of that emperor's deceased brother, Constans.<sup>9</sup> Eusebius

<sup>1</sup> St Aug. in Ps. 37, n. 3, p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> Enchir. c. 110, *De Civ. Dei*, lib. xxi. c. 24, lib. de Curâ pro Mortuis, c. 4, et serm. 182 (ol. 32) de verb. ap., where he says that prayer for the dead in the holy mysteries was observed by the whole church.

<sup>3</sup> Serm. 182 (ol. 32) de verb. ap. t. v. p. 127, et lib. de Curâ pro Mortuis, c. 1 et 18.

<sup>4</sup> Serm. 159, fol. 17 de verb. ap. n. 1, t. v., p. 765, ed. Ben.; Serm. 284, p. 1143.

<sup>5</sup> St Aug. lib de hæres. c. 53.

<sup>6</sup> St Epiph. hær. 75, n. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Conf. lib. 9, c. 13, n. 36, &c.

<sup>8</sup> T. ii. ed. Vatic. pp. 230, 236.

<sup>9</sup> St Athan. *Apol. ad Constant.* t. i. p. 300.

relates<sup>1</sup> that Constantine the Great would be buried in the porch of the Church of the Apostles, "that he might enjoy the communication of the holy prayers, the mystical sacrifice, and the divine ceremonies." The same historian testifies<sup>2</sup> that after his death "numberless multitudes poured forth prayers to God with sighs and tears for the soul of the emperor, repaying a most grateful office to that pious prince. St Paulinus, upon his brother's death, wrote to his friends, earnestly recommending him to their prayers, that by them his poor soul amidst scorching flames might receive the dew of refreshment and comfort.<sup>3</sup> St Ambrose, writing to one Faustinus, who grieved immoderately for the death of his sister, says, "I do not think your sister ought to excite your tears, but your prayers: nor that her soul is to be dishonoured by weeping, but rather recommended to God by sacrifices."<sup>4</sup> In his funeral oration on the great Theodosius he prays thus, "Give perfect rest to thy servant, Theodosius." And again: "I loved him, therefore I follow him unto the country of the living. Neither will I forsake him till by tears and prayers I shall bring the man whither his merits call him, unto the holy mountain of the Lord." He mentions the most solemn obsequies and sacrifices on the thirtieth, sometimes fortieth day,<sup>5</sup> for so long they were continued; but on the third, seventh, and thirtieth days with particular solemnity.<sup>6</sup> St Gregory the Great mentions that he having ordered thirty masses to be sung for a monk named Justus, on the thirtieth day after the last mass was said Justus appeared to Copiosus, his provost, and said, "I was in pain, but now am well."

Those of whom we speak are not damned souls, enemies of God, separated or alienated from him; but illustrious conquerors of the devil, the world, and hell; holy spirits laden with merits and graces, and bearing the precious badge of their dignity and honour by the nuptial robe of the Lamb, with which, by an indefeasible right, they are clothed. They are the sons of God, heirs of his glory and saints. Yet they are now in a state of suffering, and endure greater torments than it is possible for anyone to suffer, or for our imagination to represent to itself, in this mortal life. They suffer the privation of God, says the council of Florence, the most dreadful of all torments. No tongue can express what a cruel pain this is to a soul separated from the body, impetuously desiring to attain to God, her centre. She seems just enjoying him, attracted by his infinite charms, and carried towards him by a strong innate bent not to be conceived: yet is violently repelled and held back. Whence the poor

<sup>1</sup> De Vitâ Const. lib. iv. c. 60, p. 556, et c. 70, p. 562.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. c. 71, p. 562.

<sup>3</sup> St Paulin. Ep. 35, ad Delfin. p. 223, Ep. 36 ad Amand. p. 224, &c.

<sup>4</sup> St Ambr. Ep. 39, ad Faustin. t. ii. p. 944, ed. Ben.

<sup>5</sup> St Ambr. de Obitu Theodosii, n. 3, p. 1197, t. ii.

<sup>6</sup> See Gavant, Comm. in Missal, par. 4, tit. 18, p. 275. Mention is made of these days, after the person's death, by the Apost. Constit. lib. viii. c. 42; Palladius in Lausiac. c. 26, &c. See on them Cotelier, not in Constit. Apost. ib., and especially Dom. Menard, in Concor. Regular. and in Sacram. St Greg.

soul suffers an incomprehensible agony and torment. It is also the opinion of St Austin and other learned fathers, founded in the words of St Paul and the traditionary authority of eminent prelates of the first ages, that they also suffer a material fire like that of hell, which being created merely for an instrument of the divine vengeance, and blown up by the anger of God, with the most piercing activity torments even spirits not clothed with bodies, as our souls in this life feel the pain of the corporeal senses by the natural law of their union with our bodies. Though it be no article of faith that the fire here spoken of is not metaphorical, to express the sharpness of these torments, yet that it is real and material is the most probable opinion, grounded in the most venerable authority. "The same fire torments the damned in hell and the just in purgatory," says St Thomas,<sup>1</sup> who adds,<sup>2</sup> "The least pain in purgatory exceeds the greatest in this life." St Austin speaks to this point as follows:<sup>3</sup> "It is said, 'He will be saved, as it were, by fire.' Because it is said, 'He will be saved,' that fire is contemned. Yet it will be more grievous than whatever a man can suffer in this life. You know how much wicked men have suffered here, and can suffer. Good men may undergo as much; and what did any malefactor ever endure which martyrs have not suffered for Christ? All these torments are much more tolerable. Yet see how men do all things rather than suffer them. How much more reason have they to do what God commands them, that they may escape his torments." Venerable Bede says, "Purgatory fire will be more intolerable than all the torments that can be felt or conceived in this life." Which words are but a repetition of what Cæsarius of Arles had written before to this purpose.<sup>4</sup> "A person," says he, "may say, I am not much concerned how long I remain in purgatory, provided I may come to eternal life. Let no one reason thus. Purgatory fire will be more dreadful than whatever torments can be seen, imagined, or endured in this world. And how does anyone know whether he will stay days, months, or years? He who is afraid now to put his finger into the fire, does he not fear lest he be then all buried in torments for a long time?" Do we think that God can find torments in nature sufficient to satisfy his provoked vengeance? No, no. He creates new instruments more violent, pains utterly inconceivable to us.<sup>5</sup> A soul for one venial sin shall suffer more than all the pains of distempers, the most violent colics, gout, and stone joined in complication; more than all the most cruel torments undergone by malefactors, or invented by the most barbarous tyrants; more than all the tortures of the martyrs summed up together. This is the idea which the fathers give us of purgatory. And how long many souls may have to suffer there we know not.

The church approves perpetual anniversaries for the dead; for some

<sup>1</sup> St Tho. Suppl. qu. 100, a. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. n. 3.

<sup>3</sup> St Aug. in Ps. 87, t. iv. p. 295.

<sup>4</sup> St Caesar. Hom. I, p. 5, vel in app. Op. St Aug. t. v.

<sup>5</sup> See Bourdaloue, Loriot, La Rue, &c.

souls may be detained in pains to the end of the world, though after the day of judgment no third state will any longer subsist; God may, at the end of the world, make the torments of souls which have not then satisfied his justice so intense in one moment that their debts may be discharged. For we know that he will exact a satisfaction to the last farthing. How inexorable was he in punishing his most faithful servant Moses for one small offence!<sup>1</sup> How inflexible with regard to David<sup>2</sup> and other penitents! nay, in the person of his own divine Son!<sup>3</sup> This, even in the days of his mercy; but, after death, his justice is all rigour and severity, and can no longer be mitigated by patience. God answers their moans that his justice must be satisfied to the last farthing, and that their “night is come in which no man can work.”<sup>4</sup> But they address themselves to us, and not having a voice to be heard, they borrow that of the church and its preachers, who, to express their moans and excite our compassion, cry out to us for them in the words of Job: “Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, at least you my friends; for the hand of God hath smitten me.”<sup>5</sup> Gerson, the pious and learned chancellor of Paris, represents them crying out to us as follows:<sup>6</sup> “Pray for us, because we are unable to help ourselves. You who can do it, lend us your assistance. You who have known us on earth, you who have loved us, will you now forget and neglect us? It is commonly said, that a friend is tried in the day of need. What necessity can be equal to ours? Let it move your compassion. ‘A hard heart shall fare ill at the last day.’<sup>7</sup> Be moved by your own advantage,” &c.

If other motives have less weight with us, we certainly cannot be insensible to that of our own interest. What a comfort shall we find to eternity in the happy company of souls whose enjoyment of bliss we shall have contributed to hasten! What an honour to have ever been able to serve so holy and glorious saints! With what gratitude and earnestness will they repay the favour by their supplications for us, whilst we still labour amidst the dangers and conflicts of this world! When Joseph foretold Pharaoh’s chief butler the recovery of his dignity, he said to him, “Remember me, when it shall be well with thee; and mention me to Pharaoh, that he may bring me out of this place.”<sup>8</sup> Yet he remembered not Joseph, but forgot his fellow-sufferer and benefactor. Not so these pious souls, as St Bernard observes:<sup>9</sup> only the wicked and depraved, who are strangers to all feelings of virtue, can be ungrateful. This vice is far from the breasts of saints, who are all goodness and charity. Souls delivered and brought to glory by our endeavours will amply repay our kindness by obtaining divine graces for us. God himself will be inclined by our charity to show us also mercy, and to shower down upon us his most precious favours. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”<sup>10</sup> By

<sup>1</sup> Deut. iii. 24, 25.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings (Samuel) xxiv. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxvi. 36.

<sup>4</sup> John ix. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Job xix. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Gerson, t. iii. p. 193.

<sup>7</sup> Eccl. iii. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Gen. xl. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Serm. 5 in Fest. Omn. Sanct. n. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Matt. v. 7.

having shown this mercy to the suffering souls in purgatory, we shall be particularly entitled to be treated with mercy at our departure hence, and to share more abundantly in the general suffrages of the church, continually offered for all that have slept in Christ. The principal means by which we obtain relief for the suffering souls in purgatory are sacrifice, prayer, and almsdeeds. The unbloody sacrifice has always been offered for the faithful departed no less than for the living.<sup>1</sup> "It was not in vain," says St Chrysostom,<sup>2</sup> "that the apostles ordained a commemoration of the deceased in the holy and tremendous mysteries. They were sensible of the benefit and advantage which accrues to them from this practice. For, when the congregation stands with open arms, as well as the priests, and the tremendous sacrifice is before them, how should our prayers for them not appease God? But this is said of such as have departed in faith."

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 2:*

ALL SOULS, the commemoration of the faithful departed : ST MARCIAN, anchorite, a Syrian : BLESSED MARGARET OF LORRAINE, Duchess of Alençon : ST VICTORINUS, Bishop, one of the pillars of the Church, martyred about 304 : and ST VULGAN, who preached the faith in Lens in Artois and died in a cell there.

### NOVEMBER 3

## ST MALACHY, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF ARDMACH, OR ARMAGH (A.D. 1148)

[From St Bernard's Life, lib. iv. c. 4, and the Life of St Malachy, written by St Bernard himself, partly from his own knowledge and partly from relations sent him from Ireland by the Abbot Congan, t. ii. p. 663, ad p. 698, ed. Mabill. Also St Bernard's Letters, Ep. 341 (p. 314, t. i.) ad Malachiam Hiberniæ Archiep. anno. 1140, Ep. 356 (p. 223, anno 1141), ad Malachiam Hiberniæ Archiep. sedis Apostolicæ legatum ; and Ep. 374, anno 1148 (p. 337), ad Frates de Hibernia, de Transitu Malachiæ, giving his brethren in Ireland an account of his death ; also St Bernard's two Sermons, one spoken at his funeral, in transitu St Malachiæ (p. 1048, t. iii.), the other on his anniversary festival, entitled De St Malachiâ, p. 1052, t. iii. ed. Mabill.]

In the fifth century Ireland was converted from heathenism to Christianity. Through the three succeeding ages it became the principal seat of learning in Christendom. So happy a distinction was owing to the labours and apostolic lives of the native ecclesiastics, who were never known to abuse the great immunities and secular endowments conferred on them by the Irish princes. This change from idolatry to the gospel was brought about in a period when the Roman empire in the West was torn to pieces, and when inundations of pagan nations seized on the greater part of Europe. In that state Providence, ever watchful over the church, erected an asylum in this remote island for its repose and extension. For three hundred years the Christian youth of the continent flocked hither to be instructed in the science of the saints, and in the literature which leads to it. In the ninth

<sup>1</sup> See Card. Bona, Liturg. lib. ii. c. 15 ; Le Brun, sur les Liturgies des quatres premiers siècles, t. ii. pp. 40, 41, 330, 364, 408, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. 3 in Phil. t. xi. p. 217, ed. Montfauc.

century Ireland began to feel the grievances which followed the invasion of the sanctuary in other countries. It was infested in its turn by heathen barbarians who, under the name of Normans, ravaged at the same time the maritime districts of France, England, and Scotland; and finally made establishments in all.

It was in this state of the nation that the glorious saint whose life we are writing was born. Malachy, called in Irish *Maol-Maodhog O Morgair*,<sup>1</sup> was a native of Armagh; his parents were persons of the first rank and very virtuous, especially his mother, who was most solicitous to train him up in the fear of God. When he was of age to go to school, not content to procure him pious tutors whilst he studied grammar at Armagh, she never ceased at home to instil into his tender mind the most perfect sentiments and maxims of piety, which were deeply imprinted in his heart by that interior master in whose school he was from his infancy a great proficient. He was meek, humble, obedient, modest, obliging to all, and very diligent in his studies; he was temperate in diet, vanquished sleep, and had no inclination to childish sports and diversions, so that he far outstripped his fellow-students in learning, and his very masters in virtue. In his studies, devotions, and little practices of penance he was very cautious and circumspect to shun as much as possible the eyes of others, and all danger of vainglory, the most baneful poison of virtues. For this reason he spent not so much time in churches as he desired to do, but prayed much in retired places, and at all times frequently lifted up his pure hands and heart to heaven in such a manner as not to be taken notice of. When his master took a walk to a neighbouring village without any other company but this beloved scholar, the pious youth often remained a little behind to send up with more liberty, as it were by stealth, short inflamed ejaculations from the bow of his heart, which was always bent, says St Bernard.

To learn more perfectly the art of dying to himself, and living wholly to God and his love, Malachy put himself under the discipline of a holy recluse named Imar, or Imarius, who led a most austere life in continual prayer in a cell near the great church of Armagh. This step in one of his age and quality astonished the whole city, and many severely censured and laughed at him for it; many ascribed this undertaking to melancholy, fickleness, or the rash heat of youth; and his friends grieved and reproached him, not being able to bear the thought that one of so delicate a constitution and so fine accomplishments and dispositions for the world should embrace a state of such rigour and, in their eyes, so mean and contemptible. The saint valued not their censures, and learned, by despising them with humility and meekness, to vanquish both the world and himself. To attain to the true love of God, he condemned himself whilst alive, as it were, to

<sup>1</sup> Sir James Ware, *Antiq. Hibern.* c. 26, pp. 206, 210, &c.; Item, *de Script. Hibern.* p. 54, and Tanner, p. 502.

the grave, says St Bernard, and submitted himself to the rule of a man. The simplicity of the disciple's obedience, his love of silence, and his fervour in mortification and prayer, were both the means and the marks of his spiritual progress, which infinitely endeared him to his master, and edified even those who at first had condemned his choice. Their railleries were soon converted into praises, and their contempt into admiration; and many, moved by the example of his virtue, desired to be his imitators and companions in that manner of life. Malachy prevailed upon Imar to admit the most fervent among these petitioners, and they soon formed a considerable community. Malachy was by his eminent virtues a model to all the rest, though he always looked upon himself as the last and most unworthy of that religious society. A disciple so meek, so humble, so obedient, so mortified and devout, could not fail, by the assiduous exercises of penance and prayer, to advance apace to the summit of evangelical perfection. Imar, his superior, and Celsus, or Ceallach, Archbishop of Armagh, judged him worthy of holy orders, and this prelate obliged him, notwithstanding all the resistance he could make, to receive at his hands the order of deacon, and, some time after, the priesthood, when he was twenty-five years old, though the age which the canons then required for priestly orders was thirty years, as St Bernard testifies; but his extraordinary merit was just reason for dispensing with that rule. At the same time, the archbishop made him his vicar to preach the word of God to the rude people, and to extirpate evil customs, which were many, grievous, and inveterate, and most horribly disfigured the face of that church. Wonderful was the zeal with which St Malachy discharged this commission. He made several regulations in ecclesiastical discipline which were authorized by the bishops, and settled the regular solemn rehearsal of the canonical hours in all the churches of the diocese which, since the Danish invasions, had been omitted even in cities; in which it was of service to him that from his youth he had applied himself to the church music. What was yet of much greater importance, he renewed the use of the sacraments, especially of confession or penance, of confirmation, and regular matrimony. St Malachy, fearing lest he was not sufficiently skilled in the canons of the church to carry on a thorough reformation of discipline, and often labouring under great anxieties of mind on this account, resolved, with the approbation of his prelate, to repair for some time to Malchus, Bishop of Lismore, who had been educated in England, where he became a monk of Winchester, and was then for his learning and sanctity reputed the oracle of all Ireland. Being courteously received by this good old man, he was diligently instructed by him in all things belonging to the divine service and to the care of souls, and, at the same time, he employed his ministry in that church.

The great Abbey of Benchor,<sup>1</sup> now in the county of Down, lay at that

<sup>1</sup> Bangor.

time in a desolate condition, and its revenues were possessed by an uncle of St Malachy till it should be re-established. This uncle resigned it to his holy nephew that he might settle in it regular observance, and became himself a monk under his direction in this house, which, by the care of the saint, became a flourishing seminary of learning and piety, though not so numerous as it had formerly been. St Malachy governed this house some time, and, to use St Bernard's words, was in his deportment a living rule and a bright glass, or, as it were, a book laid open in which all might learn the true precepts of religious conversation. He not only always went before his little flock in all monastic observances, but also did particular penances and other actions of perfection which no man was able to equal; and he worked with his brethren in hewing timber and in the like manual labour. Several miraculous cures of sick persons, some of which St Bernard recounts, added to his reputation. But the whole tenour of his life, says this saint, was the greatest of his miracles; and the composure of his mind, and the inward sanctity of his soul, appeared in his countenance, which was always modestly cheerful. A sister of our saint, who had led a worldly life, died, and he recommended her soul to God for a long time in the sacrifice of the altar. Having intermitted this for thirty days, he seemed one night to be advertised in his sleep that his sister waited with sorrow in the churchyard and had been thirty days without food. This he understood of spiritual food; and having resumed the custom of saying mass, or causing one to be said for her every day, saw her after some time admitted to the door of the church, then within the church, and some days after to the altar, where she appeared in joy in the midst of a troop of happy spirits, which vision gave him great comfort.<sup>1</sup>

St Malachy, in the thirtieth year of his age, was chosen Bishop of Connor (now in the county of Antrim), and as he peremptorily refused to acquiesce in the election, he was at length obliged, by the command of Imar and the Archbishop Celsus, to submit. Upon beginning the exercise of his functions he found that his flock were Christian in name only, but in their manners savage, vicious, and worse than pagans. However, he would not run away like a hireling, but resolved to spare no pains to turn these wolves into sheep. He preached in public with an apostolical vigour, mingling tenderness with a wholesome severity; and when they would not come to the church to hear him, he sought them in the streets and in their houses, exhorted them with tenderness, and often shed tears over them. He offered to God for them the sacrifice of a contrite and humble heart, and sometimes passed whole nights weeping and with his hands stretched forth to heaven in their behalf.

After some years the city of Connor was taken and sacked by the King of Ulster; upon which St Malachy, with a hundred and twenty

<sup>1</sup> St Bern. Vit. St Malachia, c. 5.

disciples, retired into Munster, and there, with the assistance of King Cormac, built the monastery of Ibrac, which some suppose to have been near Cork, others in the isle of Beg-erin, where St Imar formerly resided. Whilst our saint governed this holy family in the strictest monastic discipline, humbling himself even to the meanest offices of the community, and, in point of holy poverty and penance, going beyond all his brethren, the Archbishop Celsus was taken with that illness of which he died. In his infirmity, he appointed St Malachy to be his successor, conjuring all persons concerned, in the name of St Patrick, the founder of that see, to concur to that promotion, and oppose the intrusion of any other person. This he not only most earnestly declared by word of mouth, but also recommended by letters to persons of the greatest interest and power in the country, particularly to the two kings of Upper and Lower Munster. This he did out of a zealous desire to abolish a most scandalous abuse which had been the source of all other disorders in the churches of Ireland. For two hundred years past the family out of which Celsus had been assumed, and which was the most powerful in the country, had, during fifteen generations, usurped the archbishopric as an inheritance, insomuch that when there was no clergyman of their kindred they intruded some married man and layman of their family who, without any holy orders, had the administration and enjoyed the revenues of that see, and even exercised a despotical tyranny over the other bishops of the island. Notwithstanding the precaution taken by Celsus, who was a good man, after his death, though Malachy was canonically elected, pursuant to his desire, Maurice, one of the above-mentioned family, got possession. Malachy declined the promotion, and alleged the dangers of a tumult and bloodshed. Thus three years passed till Malchus, Bishop of Lismore, and Gillebert, Bishop of Limerick, who was the pope's legate in Ireland, assembled the bishops and great men of the island, and threatened Malachy with excommunication if he refused to accept the archbishopric. Hereupon he submitted, but said, " You drag me to death. I obey in hopes of martyrdom; but on this condition, that if the business succeed according to your desires, when all things are settled you shall permit me to return to my former spouse and my beloved poverty." They promised he should have the liberty so to do, and he took upon him that charge and exercised his functions with great zeal through the whole province, except in the city of Armagh, which he did not enter for fear of bloodshed, so long as Maurice lived, which was two years more.

At the end of five years, after the demise of Celsus, Maurice died and, to complete his iniquities and increase his damnation, named his kinsman Nigellus for his successor. But King Cormac and the bishops resolved to instal St Malachy in that see, and he was acknowledged the only lawful metropolitan in the year 1133, the thirty-eighth of his age. Nigellus was

obliged to leave Armagh, but carried with him two relics held by the Irish in great veneration; and the common people were foolishly persuaded that he was archbishop who had them in his possession. These were a book of the gospels which had belonged to St Patrick, and a crosier, called the staff of Jesus, which was covered with gold and ornamented with rich jewels. By this fallacy some still adhered to him, and his kindred violently persecuted St Malachy. One of the chief amongst them invited him to a conference at his house, with a secret design to murder him. The saint, against the advice of all his friends, went thither, offering himself to martyrdom for the sake of peace; he was accompanied only by three disciples, who were ready to die with him. But the courage and heavenly mildness of his countenance disarmed his enemies as soon as he appeared amongst them; and he who had designed to murder him rose up to do him honour, and a peace was concluded on all sides. Nigellus not long after surrendered the sacred book and crosier into his hands; and several of the saint's enemies were cut off by visible judgments. A raging pestilence which broke out at Armagh was suddenly averted by his prayers, and he wrought many other miracles. Having rescued that church from oppression and restored discipline and peace, he insisted upon resigning the archiepiscopal dignity, according to covenant, and ordained Gelasius, a worthy ecclesiastic, in his place. He then returned to his former see: but, whereas the two sees of Connor and Down had been long united, he again divided them, consecrated another bishop for Connor, and reserved to himself only that of Down, which was the smaller and poorer. Here he established a community of regular canons, with whom he attended to prayer and meditation as much as the external duties of his charge would permit him. He regulated everything and formed great designs for the divine honour.

To obtain the confirmation of many things which he had done, he undertook a journey to Rome, in which one of his motives was to procure palls for two archbishops; namely, for the see of Armagh, which had long wanted that honour through the neglect and abuses of the late usurpers; and for another metropolitical see, which Celsus had formed a project of, but which had not been confirmed by the pope. St Malachy left Ireland in 1139; conversed some time at York with a holy priest named Sycar, an eminent servant of God; and in his way through France visited Clairvaux, where St Bernard first became acquainted with him, and conceived the greatest affection and veneration for him on account of his sanctity. St Malachy was so edified with the wonderful spirit of piety which he discovered in St Bernard and his monks that he most earnestly desired to join them in their holy exercises of penance and contemplation, and to end his days in their company; but he was never able to gain the pope's consent to leave his bishopric. Proceeding on his journey, at Yvrée, in Piedmont, he restored to health the child of the host with whom he lodged,

who was at the point of death. Pope Innocent II received him with great honour, but would not hear of his petition for spending the remainder of his life at Clairvaux. He confirmed all he had done in Ireland, made him his legate in that island, and promised him the pall. The saint in his return called again at Clairvaux, where, says St Bernard, he gave us a second time his blessing. Not being able to remain himself with those servants of God, he left his heart there and four of his companions, who, taking the Cistercian habit, afterwards came over into Ireland and instituted the abbey of Mellifont of that Order and the parent of many others in those parts. St Malachy went home through Scotland, where King David earnestly entreated him to restore to health his son Henry, who lay dangerously ill. The saint said to the sick prince, "Be of good courage; you will not die this time." Then sprinkled him with holy water, and the next day the prince was perfectly recovered.

St Malachy was received in Ireland with the greatest joy, and discharged his office of legate with wonderful zeal and fruit, preaching everywhere, holding synods, making excellent regulations, abolishing abuses, and working many miracles.

St Malachy's zeal for the re-establishment of the Irish church in its splendour moved him to meditate a second journey into France, in order to meet Pope Eugenius III, who was come into that kingdom. Innocent II died before the two palls which he had promised could be prepared and sent. Celestine II and Lucius II died in less than a year and a half. This affair having been so long delayed, St Malachy convened the bishops of Ireland and received from them a deputation to make fresh application to the apostolic see. In his journey through England, whilst he lodged with the holy canons at Gisburn, a woman was brought to him who had a loathsome cancer in her breast, whom he sprinkled with water which he had blessed, and the next day she was perfectly healed. Before he reached France the pope was returned to Rome; but St Malachy determined not to cross the Alps without first visiting his beloved Clairvaux. He arrived there in October 1148, and was received with great joy by St Bernard and his holy monks, in whose happy company he was soon to end his mortal pilgrimage. Having celebrated mass with his usual devotion on the feast of St Luke, he was seized with a fever which obliged him to take to his bed. The good monks were very active in assisting him; but he assured them that all the pains they took about him was to no purpose, because he should not recover. St Bernard doubts not but he had a foreknowledge of the day of his departure. How sick and weak soever he was, he would needs rise and crawl downstairs into the church, that he might there receive the extreme unction and the viaticum, which he did lying on ashes strewed on the floor. He earnestly begged that all persons would continue their prayers for him after his death, promising to remember them before God;

he tenderly commended also to their prayers all the souls which had been recommitted to his charge, and sweetly reposed in our Lord on All Souls' day, the 2nd of November, in the year 1148, of his age fifty-four; and was interred in the chapel of our Lady at Clairvaux, and carried to the grave on the shoulders of abbots. At his burial was present a youth, one of whose arms was struck with a dead palsy so that it hung useless and without life by his side. Him St Bernard called, and taking up the dead arm, applied it to the hand of the deceased saint, and it was wonderfully restored to itself, as this venerable author himself assures us.<sup>1</sup> St Malachy was canonized by a bull of Pope Clement (either the third or fourth), addressed to the general chapter of the Cistercians, in the third year of his pontificate.<sup>2</sup>

Two things, says St Bernard,<sup>3</sup> made Malachy a saint—perfect meekness (which is always founded in sincere profound humility) and a lively faith: by the first, he was dead to himself; by the second, his soul was closely united to God in the exercises of assiduous prayer and contemplation. “He sanctified him in faith and mildness.”<sup>4</sup> It is only by the same means we can become saints. How perfectly Malachy was dead to himself appeared by his holding the metropolitical dignity so long as it was attended with extraordinary dangers and tribulations, and by his quitting it as soon as he could enjoy it in peace; how entirely he was dead to the world he showed by his love of sufferings and poverty, and by the state of voluntary privations and self-denial in which he lived in the midst of prosperity, being always poor to himself and rich to the poor, as he is styled by St Bernard. “He seemed to live wholly to himself, yet so devoted to the service of his neighbours as if he lived wholly for them. So perfectly did neither charity withdraw him from the strictest watchfulness over himself, nor the care of his own soul hinder him in anything from attending to the service of others. If you saw him amidst the cares and functions of his pastoral charge, you would say he was born for others, not for himself. Yet, if you considered him in his retirement, or observed his constant recollection, you would think that he lived only to God and himself.”

### ST WENEFRIDE, OR WINEFRIDE, VIRGIN, MARTYR

HER father, whose name was Thevith, was very rich and one of the prime nobility in the country, being son to Eluith, the chief magistrate, and second man in the kingdom of North Wales, next to the king. Her virtuous parents desired above all things to breed her up in the fear of God, and to preserve her soul untainted amidst the corrupt air of the world. About that time St Beuno, Benno, or Benow, a holy priest and monk, who is said to have been uncle to our saint by the mother, having founded certain

<sup>1</sup> St Bern. vit. St Malach. c. ult. p. 698.  
<sup>2</sup> Serm. de St Malachia.

<sup>3</sup> Mabill. p. 698.  
<sup>4</sup> Ecclius. xi. 5.

religious houses in other places, came and settled in that neighbourhood. Thevith rejoiced at his arrival, gave him a spot of ground free from all burden or tribute to build a church on, and recommended his daughter to be instructed by him in Christian piety.<sup>1</sup> When the holy priest preached to the people, Wenefride was placed at his feet, and her tender soul eagerly imbibed his heavenly doctrine, and was wonderfully affected with the great truths which he delivered, or rather which God addressed to her by his mouth. The love of the sovereign and infinite good growing daily in her heart, her affections were quite weaned from all the things of this world: and it was her earnest desire to consecrate her virginity by vow to God, and, instead of an earthly bridegroom, to choose Jesus Christ for her spouse. Her parents readily gave their consent, shedding tears of joy and thanking God for her holy resolution. She first made a private vow of virginity in the hands of St Beuno; and some time after received the religious veil from him, with certain other pious virgins, in whose company she served God in a small nunnery which her father had built for her, under the direction of St Beuno, near Holy-Well.

After the death of St Beuno, St Wenefride left Holy-Well, and after putting herself for a short time under the direction of St Deifer, entered the nunnery of Gutherin in Denbighshire, under the direction of a very holy abbot called Elerius, who governed there a double monastery. After the death of the abbess Theonia, St Wenefride was chosen to succeed her. In all monuments and calendars she is styled a martyr; all the accounts we have of her agree that Caradoc or Cradoc, son of Alain, prince of that country, being violently fallen in love with her, gave so far way to his brutish passion that, finding it impossible to extort her consent to marry him or gratify his desires, in his rage he one day pursued her and cut off her head as she was flying from him to take refuge in the church which St Beuno had built at Holy-Well. Robert of Shrewsbury and some others add that Cradoc was swallowed up by the earth upon the spot; secondly, that in the place where the head fell the wonderful well which is seen there sprang up, with pebble stones and large parts of the rock in the bottom stained with red streaks, and with moss growing on the sides under the water, which renders a sweet fragrant smell;<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Vit. Wenefr. in app. ad Lel. Itiner. t. iv. p. 128, ed Nov.

<sup>2</sup> At Holy-Well such vast quantities of water spring constantly without intermission or variation that about twenty-six tuns are raised every minute, or fifty-two tuns two hogsheads in two minutes; for, if the water be let out, the basin and well, which contains at least two hundred and forty tuns, are filled in less than ten minutes. The water is so clear that though the basin is above four feet deep a pin is easily perceived lying at the bottom. The spring head is a fine octagon basin, twenty-nine feet two inches in length, twenty-seven feet four inches in breadth, and eighteen feet two inches high, and is covered with a chapel. The present exquisite Gothic building was erected by Henry VII and his mother, the Countess of Richmond and Derby. The ceiling is curiously carved and ornamented with coats of arms, and the figures of Henry VII, his mother, and the Earl of Derby. Those who desire to bathe descend by twenty steps into the area under the chapel; but no one can bathe there in the spring head, the impetuosity with which the water springs up making it too difficult: hence the bathers descend by two circular staircases under a large arch into the bath, which is a great basin forty-two feet long, fourteen feet seven inches broad, with a handsome flagged walk round.

thirdly, that the martyr was raised to life by the prayers of St Beuno, and bore ever after the mark of her martyrdom by a red circle on her skin about her neck. If these authors, who lived a long time after these transactions, were by some of their guides led into any mistakes in any of these circumstances, neither the sanctity of the martyr nor the devotion of the place can be hereby made liable to censure. St Wenefride died on the 22nd of June, as the old panegyric preached on her festival, and several of her lives, testify; the most ancient life of this saint, in the Cottonian manuscript, places her death or rather her burial at Guthurin on the 24th of June. The words are, “The place where she lived with the holy virgins was called Guthurin, where sleeping, on the eighth before the calends of July, she was buried, and rests in the Lord.” Her festival was removed to the 3rd of November, probably on account of some translation; and, in 1391, Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, with his clergy in convocation assembled, ordered her festival to be kept on that day throughout his province with an office of nine lessons,<sup>1</sup> which is inserted in the Sarum Breviary. The time when this saint lived is not mentioned in any of her lives; most, with Alford and Cressy, think it was about the close of the seventh century. Her relics were translated from Guthurin to Shrewsbury in the year 1138, and deposited with great honour in the church of the Benedictin abbey, which had been founded there, without the walls, in 1083, by Roger, Earl of Montgomery. Herbert, abbot of that house, procured the consent of the diocesan, the Bishop of Bangor (for the bishopric of St Asaph's, in which Guthurin is situated, was only restored in 1143), and caused the translation to be performed with great solemnity, as is related by Robert, then prior of that house (probably the same who was made Bishop of Bangor in 1210), who mentions some miraculous cures performed on that occasion, to which he was eye-witness. The shrine of this saint was plundered at the dissolution of monasteries.

Several miracles were wrought through the intercession of this saint at Guthurin, Shrewsbury, and especially Holy-Well. To instance some examples: Sir Roger Bodenham, Knight of the Bath, after he was abandoned by the ablest physicians and the most famous colleges of that faculty, was cured of a terrible leprosy by bathing in this miraculous fountain in 1606, upon which he became himself a Catholic, and gave an ample certificate of his wonderful cure, signed by many others. Mrs Jane Wakeman, of Sussex, in 1630, brought to the last extremity by a terrible ulcerated breast, was perfectly healed in one night by bathing thrice in that well, as she and her husband attested. A poor widow of Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, had been long lame and bedridden, when she sent a single penny to Holy-Well, to be given to the first poor body the person should meet with there; and at the very time it was given at Holy-Well

<sup>1</sup> Lyndewode, fol. 76; Johnson's Canons, t. ii. ad an. 1398.

the patient arose in perfect health at Kidderminster. This fact was examined and juridically attested by Mr James Bridges, who was afterwards sheriff of Worcester, in 1651. Mrs Mary Newman had been reduced to a skeleton, and to such a decrepit state and lameness that for eighteen years she had not been able to point or set her foot on the ground. She tried all helps in England, France, and Portugal, but in vain. At last she was perfectly cured in the very well whilst she was bathing herself the fifth time. Roger Whetstone, a quaker near Broomsgrove, by bathing at Holy-Well was cured of an inveterate lameness and palsy, by which he was converted to the Catholic faith. Innumerable such instances might be collected. Cardinal Baronius<sup>1</sup> expresses his astonishment at the wonderful cures which the pious Bishop of St Asaph's, the pope's vicegerent for the episcopal functions at Rome, related to him as an eye-witness. See St Wenefride's life, written by Robert, Prior of Shrewsbury, translated into English, with frequent abridgments and some few additions from other authors (but not without some mistakes), first by F. Alford, whose true name was Griffith; afterwards by J. F., both Jesuits; and printed in 1635: and again, with some alterations and additional late miracles, by F. Metcalf, S.J., in 1712. Lluydh, in his catalogue of Welch manuscripts, mentions two lives of St Wenefride in that language, one in the hands of Humphrey, then Bishop of Hereford; the other in the college of Jesus, Oxon.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 3:*

St FLOUR, apostle of and first Bishop of Lodeve in Languedoc; his relics are kept in the cathedral there: St MALACHY, Archbishop of Armagh: St PAPOUL or PAPULUS, priest and martyr, after whom a town in Languedoc is called: St HUBERT, Bishop of Liege: St RUMWALD, patron of Brackley and Buckingham: and St WINEFRIDE, virgin and martyr, patron of North Wales, who served God in a small nunnery near Holywell, where miracles still attest her sanctity.

#### NOVEMBER 4

### ST CHARLES BORROMEEO, CARDINAL, ARCHBISHOP OF MILAN, AND CONFESSOR (A.D. 1584)

[His life was originally and accurately written by three eminent persons, who had all had the happiness of living some time with him; by two in Latin, Austin Valerio, afterwards Cardinal and Bishop of Veronâ, and Charles Bascapè, or a Basilicâ St Petri, General of the Barnabites, afterwards Bishop of Novara; and more in detail in Italian by Peter Giussano, a priest of the congregation of the Oblates at Milan. See also Vagliano, Sommario delle vite degli arcivescovi di Milano, in Milano, an. 1715, c. 126, p. 340; and his life by John Baptist, possevini, priest of Mantua. Likewise Lettera di Agata Sfondrata, priora di St Paolo in Milano alla priora de Angeliche di St Marta di Cremona, per la morte di San Carlo; inter sermones St Caroli per Saxium, t. v. p. 292; Lades St Carolo tributæ, ib. p. 299; and Oltrocchi, Not. in Giuss. printed at Milan, 1751.]

ST CHARLES BORROMEEO, the model of pastors and the reformer of ecclesiastical discipline in these degenerate ages, was son of Gilbert Borromeo, Count of Arona, and his lady, Margaret of Medicis, sister to

<sup>1</sup> Not. in *Martyr. Rom. hac die.*

John James of Medicis, Marquis of Marignan, and of Cardinal John Angelus of Medicis, afterwards Pope Pius IV. The family of Borromeo is one of the most ancient in Lombardy, and has been famous for several great men, both in the church and state. The saint's parents were remarkable for their discretion and piety. Their family consisted of six children—Count Frederic, who afterwards married the sister of the Duke of Urbino, and our saint, and four daughters; Isabel, who became a nun in the monastery called of the Virgins in Milan; Camilla, married to Cæsar Gonzaga, Prince of Malfetto; Jeronima, married to Fabricio Gesualdi, eldest son to the Prince of Venosa; and Anne, married to Fabricio, eldest son of Mark-Antony Colonna, a Roman prince and Viceroy of Sicily. All these children were very virtuous. Anne, though engaged in the world, imitated all the religious exercises and austerities of her brother Charles, prayed many hours together with a recollection that astonished everyone; and, in order to increase the fund of her excessive charities, retrenched every superfluous expense in her table, clothes, and housekeeping. By her virtue and the saintly education of her children, she was the admiration of all Italy and Sicily, and died at Palermo in 1582.

St Charles was born on the 2nd of October, in 1538, in the castle of Arona, upon the borders of Lake-Major, fourteen miles from Milan. The saint in his infancy gave proofs of his future sanctity, loved prayer, was from the beginning very diligent in his studies, and it was his usual amusement to build little chapels, adorn altars, and sing the divine office. By his happy inclination to piety and love of ecclesiastical functions, his parents judged him to be designed by God for the clerical state, and initiated him in it as soon as his age would allow him to receive the tonsure. This destination was the saint's earnest choice; and though by the canons he was not yet capable of taking upon him an irrevocable obligation, both he and his father were far from the sacrilegious abuse of those who determine their children, or make choice of the inheritance of Christ, with a view merely to temporal interest or the convenience of their family. Charles was careful, even in his childhood, that the gravity of his dress and his whole conduct should be such as became the sanctity of his profession. When he was twelve years old, his uncle, Julius Cæsar Borromeo, resigned to him the rich Benedictine abbey of SS. Gratinian and Felin, martyrs, in the territory of Arona, which had been long enjoyed by some clergymen of that family *in commendam*. St Charles, as young as he was, put his father in mind that the revenue, except what was expended on his necessary education at his studies for the service of the church, was the patrimony of the poor, and could not be applied to any other uses or blended with his other money. The father wept for joy at the pious solicitude of the child; and though during his son's nonage the administration of the revenues was committed to him, he gave this up to the young

saint that he might himself dispose of the overplus in alms, which he did with the most scrupulous fidelity in his accounts. St Charles learned Latin and humanity at Milan, and was afterwards sent by his father to the university of Pavia, where he studied the civil and canon law under Francis Alciat, the eminent civilian. St Charles, though on account of an impediment in his speech, and his love of silence, was by some esteemed slow, yet, by the soundness of his judgment and a diligent application, made good progress in it. And the prudence, piety, and strictness of his conduct rendered him a model of the youth in the university, and proof against evil company and all other dangers, which he watchfully shunned. Such was the corruption of that place that several snares were laid for his virtue; but prayer and retirement were his arms against all assaults, and the grace of God carried him through difficulties which seemed almost insurmountable. He communicated every eight days, after the example of his father, and shunned all connections or visits which could interrupt his regular exercises or hours of retirement; yet was he very obliging to all who desired to speak to him. His father's death brought him to Milan in 1558; but when he had settled the affairs of his family with surprising prudence and address, he went back to Pavia, and after completing his studies, took the degree of doctor in the laws towards the end of the year 1559.

When he had taken the degree of doctor he returned to Milan, where he soon after received news that his uncle, the Cardinal of Medicis, by whom he was tenderly beloved, was chosen pope on the 25th of December, in 1559, in the conclave held after the death of Paul IV. The new pope being a patrician of Milan, that city made extraordinary rejoicings, and complimented his two nephews in the most pompous and solemn manner. St Charles gave no signs of joy on the occasion, but only persuaded his brother Frederic to go with him to confession and communion; which they did. Count Frederic went to Rome to compliment his holiness; but St Charles stayed at Milan, living in the same manner he did before, till his uncle sent for him, and on the last day of the same year created him cardinal, and on the 8th of February following, nominated him Archbishop of Milan, when he was in the twenty-third year of his age. The pope, however, detained him at Rome, placed him at the head of the Consult, or council, with power to sign in his name all requests, and entrusted him with the entire administration of the ecclesiastical state. St Charles endeavoured as much as possible to decline these posts, but after he was made priest, he accepted the office of grand penitentiary, wherein he was to labour for God and the people. He was also legate of Bologna, Romaniola, and the marquisate of Ancona, and protector of Portugal, the Low Countries, the Catholic cantons of Switzerland, and the Orders of St Francis, the Carmelites, the Knights of Malta, and others. By the

entire confidence which his uncle reposed in him, he may be said to have governed the church during his pontificate; and, as he received from him daily the most sensible tokens of the strongest and most sincere affection, so, full of the most tender sentiments of gratitude, he constantly made him the best return of duty, tenderness, and affection he was able. The sole end which he proposed to himself in all his actions and undertakings was the glory of God and the good of his church. For fear of ever deceiving himself, he had about him several persons of approved wisdom and virtue, without whose advice he took no resolution, and to whom he listened with great humility and prudence. In the government of the ecclesiastical state he was very careful that provisions should be everywhere plentiful and cheap, and that all judges and magistrates should be persons of consummate prudence and inflexible integrity. His patience in bearing contradictions and hearing the complaints of persons of all ranks was a proof of his sincere charity. It is incredible what a multiplicity of business he dispatched without ever being in a hurry, merely by the dint of unwearyed application, by his aversion to idle amusements, and being regular and methodical in all that he did. He always found time, in the first place, for his devotions and sacred studies, and for conversing with himself by reflection and pious reading. He read also some of the ancient Stoic philosophers, and reaped much benefit from the *Enchyridion* of Epictetus, as he frequently expressed. He was a great patron of learning, and promoted exceedingly all its useful branches among the clergy.

St Charles judged it so far necessary to conform to the custom of the court as to have a magnificent palace well furnished, to keep a sumptuous equipage, and a table suitable to his rank, and to give entertainments. Yet he was in his heart most perfectly disengaged from all these things, most mortified in his senses, humble, meek, and patient in all his conduct. Honoured and caressed by the whole Christian world, having in his power the distribution of riches and honours, and enjoying himself whatever the world could bestow, he considered in all this nothing but dangers; and far from taking any delight herein, watched with trembling over his own heart lest any subtle poison of the love of the world should insinuate itself, and in all things sought only the establishment of the kingdom of God. Many are converted to God by adversity; but St Charles, in the softest gale of prosperity, by taking a near view of the emptiness, and arming himself against the snares of the world, became every day more and more disentangled from it, and more an inhabitant of heaven. He sighed after the liberty of the saints, and trembled at the sight both of the dangers and of the obligations of his situation; he also considered that obedience to the chief pastor fixed him for a time at a distance from the church of Milan, the charge of which he had taken upon himself. And though he had pro-

vided for its government and the remedying of its disorders in the best manner he was able, by excellent regulations, by a suffragan bishop named Jerom Ferragata (whom he sent thither to make the visitation and to officiate in his place), and by a vicar-general of great experience, learning, and piety called Nicholas Ormanetto (who had formerly been Grand Vicar of Verona, had afterwards attended Cardinal Pole in his legation in England and been there his chief assistant, and after his return would take upon him no other charge but that of a single curacy in the diocese of Verona), yet St Charles considered the duty of personal service and residence, neither did the command of the pope, by which he was obliged to attend for some time the government of the universal church for a greater good and necessity, make him easy.

It happened that Bartholomew de Martyribus, the most pious and learned Archbishop of Braga, came from Trent to Rome to wait upon his holiness. To him, as to a faithful servant of God, enlightened by him, and best able to direct others in perplexing circumstances, the saint opened his heart in the manner following: "For this long time I have begged of God, with all the earnestness I am able, to enlighten me with regard to the state in which I live. You see my condition; you know what it is to be a pope's nephew, and a nephew most tenderly beloved by him; nor are you ignorant what it is to live in the court of Rome. The dangers which encompass me are infinite. I see a great number; and there are a great many more which I do not discern. What, then, ought I to do, young as I am, and without experience, and having no part or ingredient of virtue but through the divine grace an earnest desire of obtaining it?" The holy cardinal proceeded to explain his difficulties and fears; then added, "God has inspired me with a vehement ardour for penance, and an earnest desire to prefer his fear and my salvation to all things; and I have some thoughts of breaking my bonds and retiring into some monastery, there to live as if there were only God and myself in the world." This he said with an amiable sincerity which charmed the director, who, after a short pause, cleared all his doubts, assuring him by solid reasons that he ought not to quit his hold of the helm which God put into his hands for the necessary and most important service of the universal church, his uncle being very old; but that he ought to contrive means to attend his own church as soon as God should open him a way to it. St Charles, rising up, embraced him and said God had sent him thither for his sake, and that his words had removed a heavy weight from his heart; and he begged that God, who by his grace had shown him the station in which it was his will that he should labour in his service, would vouchsafe to support him in it by his divine grace.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Ripamont, *de vita Caroli*, lib. ii. c. 2; Giussano, lib. i. c. 2; Sacy, *Vie de Barthol. des Martyrs*, lib. ii. c. 23, p. 263; Tournon, *Hommes Illustr.* t. iv. p. 638

In November 1562, the saint's elder and only brother was carried off in the bloom of life and most flourishing fortune by a sudden fever. St Charles, who had never forsaken him during his illness, bore his death, which overwhelmed all other friends with consternation and grief, with surprising resignation; the sentiments of a lively faith being stronger in him than those of flesh and blood. In profound recollection he adored the decrees of Providence, and was penetrated more seriously than ever with a sense of eternity and of the instability of human things. All his friends, and the pope himself, pressed him to resign his ecclesiastical dignities and marry to support his family: but more effectually to rid himself of their solicitations, he made more haste to engage himself in orders, and was ordained priest before the end of that year. The pope soon after created him grand penitentiary and arch-priest of St Mary Major. St Charles founded at that time the noble college of the Borromeos at Pavia for the education of the clergy of Milan, and obtained several bulls for the reformation of many abuses in ecclesiastical discipline. The council of Trent, which had been often interrupted and resumed, was brought to a conclusion in 1563, the last session being held on the 5th of December, in which the decrees of all the former sessions under Paul III, Julius III, and Pius IV were confirmed and subscribed by two hundred and fifty-five fathers, viz. four legates of the holy see, two cardinals, three patriarchs, twenty-five archbishops, one hundred and sixty-eight bishops, thirty-nine deputies of absent prelates, seven abbots, and seven generals of religious Orders. Difficulties which seemed insurmountable had been thrown in the way, sometimes by the emperor, sometimes by the King of France, sometimes by the King of Spain, or others; and it was owing to the unwearyed zeal and prudence, and doubtless to the prayers of St Charles Borromeo, that they were all happily removed; who, informing the prelates and princes of his uncle's sickness, engaged them by his pressing solicitations to hasten the close of that venerable assembly. No sooner was it finished but St Charles began strenuously to enforce the execution of all its decrees for the reformation of discipline. At his instigation, the pope pressed earnestly all bishops to found seminaries according to the decree of the council, and set the example by establishing such a seminary at Rome, the care of which was committed to the Jesuits.<sup>1</sup> In opposition to the new errors, his holiness published, in 1564, the creed which bears his name, and commanded all who are preferred to ecclesiastical livings, dignities, &c., to subscribe the same.<sup>2</sup>

St Charles had always about him several very learned and virtuous persons: his spiritual director in Rome was F. Ribera, a learned Jesuit, and by his advice he regulated his retreats and devotions.

King Philip II had settled upon St Charles a yearly pension of nine

<sup>1</sup> Ciaconius, vit. Pontif. t. iii. p. 880.

<sup>2</sup> Labbe, Conc. t. xiv. p. 944.

thousand crowns, and confirmed to him the gift of the principality of Oria, which he had before bestowed on his elder brother Frederic. The pope before his departure created him a legate *a latere* through all Italy. The saint left Rome on the 1st of September in 1565, stopped some days at Bologna, where he was legate, and was received at Milan with the utmost joy and pomp that can be imagined, the people calling him in their acclamations a second St Ambrose. After having prayed a long time prostrate before the blessed sacrament in the great church, he went to his palace and received visits, but made this necessary ceremony of civility as short as possible. On Sunday he made a pathetic sermon, and soon after opened his first provincial council, at which assisted two foreign cardinals and eleven suffragan bishops, among whom were Bernardin Scotti, Cardinal of Trani, Bishop of Placentia, Guy Ferrier, Bishop of Vercelli (to whom St Charles gave the cardinal's hat in this council, by his uncle's deputation), Jerom Vida, the famous Bishop of Alba, and Nicholas Sfondrat, Bishop of Cremona, afterwards Pope Gregory XIV. Five suffragan bishops (of whom two were cardinals) sent deputies, being themselves hindered from making their appearance; the suffragan see of Ventimil was vacant. The dignity, majesty, and piety with which this council was celebrated by a young cardinal, only twenty-six years of age, and the excellence of its regulations for the reception and observance of the council of Trent, for the reformation of the clergy, the celebration of the divine office, the administration of the sacraments, the manner of giving catechism in all parish churches on Sundays and holydays, and many other points, surprised everyone; and the pope wrote to St Charles a letter of congratulation.<sup>1</sup> When the council was broke up, St Charles set about the visitation of his diocese; but went through Verona to Trent, by the pope's orders, to receive the two sisters of the Emperor Maximilian II: Barbara, married to Alphonsus of Esti, Duke of Ferrara, and Jane, married to Francis of Medicis, Duke of Florence. The former he attended to Ferrara, and the latter as far as Fiorenzola, in Tuscany, where he received news by an express that the pope lay dangerously ill. He hastened to Rome, and being informed by the physicians that his uncle's life was despaired of, he went into his chamber, and showing him a crucifix which he held in his hand, said to him, "Most holy father, all your desires and thoughts ought to be turned towards heaven. Behold Jesus Christ crucified, who is the only foundation of our hope; he is our mediator and advocate; the victim and sacrifice for our sins. He is goodness and patience itself; his mercy is moved by the tears of sinners, and he never refuses pardon and grace to those who ask it with a truly contrite and humbled heart." He then conjured his holiness to grant him one favour, as the greatest he had ever received from him. The pope said anything in his power should be

<sup>1</sup> Giussano. lib. i. c. 11; Raynald. ad an. 1565, n. 26; Ciaconius, t. iii. p. 892.

granted him. "The favour which I most earnestly beg," said the saint, "is, that as you have but a very short time to live, you lay aside all worldly business and thoughts, and employ your strength and all your powers in thinking on your salvation, and in preparing yourself to the best of your power for your last passage." His holiness received this tender advice with great comfort, and the cardinal gave strict orders that no one should speak to the pope upon any other subject. He continued by his uncle's bed-side to his last breath, never ceasing to dispose him for death by all the pious practices and sentiments which his charity could suggest; and administering himself the viaticum and extreme unction. Pope Pius IV was also assisted in his last moments by St Philip Neri, and died on the 10th of December in 1565, being sixty-six years and nine months old, and having sat six years wanting sixteen days. His last words as he expired were, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." In the conclave, in which St Charles had much the greatest sway, our saint's conduct was such as convinced his colleagues that he had nothing but the glory of God and the good of the church at heart, and that the most subtle passions which so often blind men in their views, and insinuate themselves into their actions, had no place in his heart. At first he had thoughts of preferring Cardinal Morone, whose moderation, zeal, and experience had recommended him at Trent, or the most pious Cardinal Sirlet; but finding obstacles raised, he concurred strenuously to the promotion of St Pius V, though he was a creature of the Caraffas, and consequently esteemed no friend to his uncle and his family. The saint in his letter to Cardinal Henry of Portugal, giving an account of this election, says that entering into the conclave, he had looked upon it as his principal duty and care to watch over himself with great circumspection, and examined narrowly his heart for fear of being seduced by any personal affection or interest which might have any secret influence and infect the purity of his views and intention. St Pius V, who was chosen on the 7th of January in 1566, did all in his power to engage St Charles to stay at Rome and accept of the same employments which he had enjoyed under his predecessor. But the holy archbishop feared that even to resign his church without having remedied the disorders which had taken root in it would have been to abandon it; and pressed his return to his people with such zeal that the pope, after having taken his advice for several days, dismissed him with his blessing.

St Charles arrived at Milan in April 1566, and went vigorously to work for the reformation of his diocese. He began by the regulation of his own family, considering that the task would be easier when all he could prescribe to others was already practised at home. He laboured, in the first place, for the most perfect sanctification of his own soul, the episcopal character being a state of the greatest perfection and sanctity, and was

most severe towards himself. The austerities which he practised amidst the incredible fatigues of his apostolic life seem almost excessive. His fasts were at first moderate, that he might inure his body by degrees to greater severities; but for a long time he continued every week to increase them out of an earnest desire of practising every means of advancing in the path of Christian perfection. Yet his austerities were discreet, and even at the end of his life his strength seemed never to fail him for his functions; it seemed to redouble through his zeal when extraordinary fatigues presented themselves, so that he never sunk under any burden. To exclude the imperfection of secretly seeking his own will in his austerities (which he said was to corrupt our penance), he treated his body with an entire indifference, and ate either wheat, or black bread, or chestnuts; and drank either clear, dirty, or snow water, such as he met with where he came. For several years before his death he fasted every day on bread and water, Sundays and holydays only excepted, on which he took with his bread some pulse, herbs, or apples; but never touched any flesh, fish, eggs, or wine; nor would he allow the water he drank to have been warmed. In Lent he abstained even from bread, and lived on dried figs and boiled beans; in Holy Week his food was only a small bitter sort of peas which he ate raw. The whole year he never ate oftener than once a day. From a violent cold and long sickness which he had contracted whilst he was a student at Pavia, in the twentieth year of his age, he was for many years troubled with phlegm, which caused frequent disorders in his health; and which no remedies could cure till, by this excessive abstemiousness, it was perfectly removed. Whence it became a proverb to call a long and rigorous abstinence "The remedy of Cardinal Borromeo." Pope Gregory XIII commanded him by a brief to moderate his austerities. The saint received this order after he had passed the Lent to the last week without any other food than dried figs; and in compliance mitigated some little of his intended rigours in Holy Week. He wrote to his holiness, declaring his readiness to obey, but assuring him that he found by experience that a spare diet was conducive to his health. Whereupon the pope left him to his discretion; and the same rigid life he continued to his death. St Charles constantly wore a rough hair shirt; took very little rest; and before great festivals passed the whole night in watching. When others advised him to allow more to the necessity of nature, he used to say his uncle, John James of Medicis, a famous captain, and many other generals, only slept a short time in a chair in the night; "and ought not a bishop who is engaged in a warfare against hell," said he, "to do as much?" The saint only slept sitting in a chair, or lying down upon a rough bed in his clothes, till, at the earnest request of the bishops of his province, he consented to alter this custom. From which time he lay on a bed of straw, having for his pillow a sack filled with straw, without any other covering than

a poor counterpane stuffed with straw, and two coarse sheets laid on a straw bed.

His patience in bearing cold and all other hardships he carried to a like excess. When one would have a bed aired for him, he said with a smile, "The best way not to find the bed cold is to go colder to bed than the bed is." His austerities are not mentioned as imitable; yet ought to excite all to the constant practice of some mortification, in order to keep the senses in due subjection and to make our lives a constant martyrdom of penance. But the essential mortification is that of the will and the passions, to which this exterior is a great help. How eminently St Charles excelled herein appears by his humility, meekness, and entire disengagement from all earthly things. So deeply was he grounded in the knowledge and contempt of himself that the highest honours which he enjoyed under his uncle made no impression upon his mind; he regarded them as burdens, and declined all except those which he was obliged to accept for the good of the church and the salvation of souls. In his undertakings he never suffered anything to be ascribed to himself but faults. Under his robes he wore a very poor garment which he called his own, and which was so mean, and usually so old and ragged, that once a beggar refused to accept of it. His servants he chiefly employed in other affairs, but did everything for himself that he could, and it was his delight even to serve others; though he did this in such a manner as never to do anything unbecoming his dignity, being sensible what he owed to his rank. The least shadow of praise or flattery was most hateful to him. All supernatural favours and interior graces and consolations which he received in prayer he was most careful to conceal; and he had a little cell in the garrets of his palace at a distance from the chambers of others to which he often retired. He never spoke of his own actions unless to ask advice or to condemn himself. It was an extreme pleasure to him to converse with and to catechise the poor, which he did among the poor inhabitants of the wildest mountains. The Bishop of Ferrara, coming to meet him when he was occupied in the visitation of a poor valley, found him sick of an ague, lying on a coarse bed in a very poor cottage. At the sight he was so struck as to be scarce able to speak. St Charles, perceiving his confusion, told him he was treated very well, and much better than he deserved. The accent with which he spoke this astonished the bishop much more than what he saw. If he was put in mind of any fault, he expressed the most sincere gratitude; and he gave a commission to two prudent and pious priests of his household to put him in mind of everything they saw amiss in his actions, and he often begged that favour of strangers. The sweetness and gravity with which he reproved or exhorted others was the fruit of his sincere humility and charity. From his childhood mildness seemed to form his character, and even in his youth he seemed never to feel any emotion of anger against

schoolfellows or others. This virtue was daily more and more perfected in him as he advanced in the victory over himself. A certain priest who took delight in finding fault with his actions he kept constantly in his family, treated him with the greatest regard, and in his will left him a pension for life upon his estate. The saint's tongue was always the interpreter of his heart; his candour and sincerity appeared in all his words and transactions, and his promises were inviolable. The confidence which everyone on this account reposed in him showed the incomparable advantage which a character of strict sincerity and veracity gives over lying and hypocrisy, which the saint could never bear in anyone. He refused dispensations and grants which seemed unjust with invincible firmness, but with so much sweetness as to make the parties themselves enter into his reasons.

The management of his temporalities he left entirely to stewards of approved probity and experience, whose accounts he took once a year. To inspire his clergy with the love of holy poverty, he severely reprobated even bishops who discovered a spirit of interestedness; and he used to repeat to them the prayer of St Austin, who often begged of God that he would take from his heart the love of riches, which strangely withdraws a man from the love of God, and alienates his affections from spiritual exercises; certainly nothing can be baser in a minister of the altar, or more unworthy and mere contrary to his character, than that foul passion. When others told him he ought to have a garden at Milan to take the air in, his answer was that the holy scriptures ought to be the garden of a bishop. If any spoke to him of fine palaces or gardens he said, We ought to build and to think of eternal houses in heaven. His chief almoner, who was a pious priest named Julius Petrucci, was ordered to give among the poor of Milan, of whom he kept an exact list, two hundred crowns a month, besides whatever extraordinary sums he should call upon the stewards for, which were very frequent, and so great that they were obliged to contract considerable debts to satisfy them, of which they often complained to St Charles, but could not prevail with him to moderate his alms. The saint would never suffer any beggar to be dismissed without some alms, wherever he was.

Hospitality the saint looked upon as a bishop's indispensable duty, and he was most obliging and liberal in entertaining princes, prelates, and strangers of all ranks, but often at the table at which his upper family ate all together, and without dainties or luxury; and he endeavoured as much as possible to conceal his own abstemiousness; of which he would not suffer the least sign to be given or notice taken, everyone being free to eat as he pleased at his table. His liberality appears in many monuments which yet remain at Rome, Milan, and in many parts of that diocese. The Church of St Praxedes, at Rome, which gave him the title of cardinal, was magnificently repaired and almost rebuilt by him. He adorned the

Church of St Mary Major, of which he was arch-priest. At Bologna, whilst he was legate there, he built the public schools in a stately and finished manner, with a beautiful fountain in the middle of the city. At Milan he did many things to adorn the metropolitical church, and built houses for all the canons of an admirable architecture, with a subterraneous passage for them to go to the church without being seen by anyone; also a dwelling-place for the rest of the clergy of that church; and the archiepiscopal palace, chapel, prisons, and stables; the great seminary at Milan, and two other seminaries there; three more in other parts of the diocese; the convent of Capuchins (whom he established at Milan), with apartments for his clergy to make retreats there, near one of his seminaries. He settled at Milan the Theatins; also the Jesuits, whose college of Brera he founded at Milan, and to whom he made over for the foundation of their novitiate his abbey of St Gratinian, at Arona. It would be tedious to enumerate the pious settlements he made for his Oblats, and the churches, hospitals, and other public buildings which he repaired or adorned. The revenues of his archbishopric he divided into three parts, one of which was appropriated to his household, another to the poor, and the third to the reparation of churches; and the account of these revenues, to the last farthing, he laid before his provincial councils, saying he was no more than the administrator and steward.

The saint expressed always a particular joy when he found any opportunity of serving his enemies, or of returning good for evil. This watchfulness over his heart against all inordinate affections made him also watchful in his words, in which he was very sparing, and careful never to say anything superfluous. Fearing to mis-spend, or rob from the great obligations of his charge, one moment of his time, he laid it all out in serious employments: at table, or whilst his hair was cutting, he listened to some pious book that was read to him, or he dictated letters or instructions. When he fasted on bread and water and dined in private, he ate and read at the same time, and on his knees when the book was the holy scripture; and, at the same time, his cheeks were often watered abundantly with his tears. After dinner he gave audience to his country vicars and curates, instead of conversing. In his journeys he always either prayed or studied on the road, and in the regular distribution of his time allowed himself none for recreation, finding in the different employments of his charge both corporeal exercise and relaxation of the mind sufficient for maintaining the vigour of the mind and health of body. He said that "A bishop ought never to take a walk either alone or with others." Certain persons telling him that a very experienced and pious director said a person ought generally to allow himself seven hours for rest every night, he said bishops must be excepted from that rule. When some persons told him he ought to read some newspapers in order to be acquainted with certain public transactions,

for his own conduct on certain occasions, and might spare now and then three or four minutes for this, he made answer that a bishop ought totally to employ his mind and heart in meditating on the law of God; which he cannot do who fills his soul with the vain curiosities of the world; and he attends more easily to God who hears least of them.

It was a rule, which he inviolably observed, to go every morning to confession before he said mass, and to make a spiritual retreat twice every year, in each of which he made a general confession for the time since his last spiritual exercises. After employing many hours on his knees in astonishing sentiments of compunction, he accused himself of the least failings and omissions with abundance of tears. His confessors at Milan were F. Francis Adorno, a very pious Jesuit, and an interior man whom he had invited from Genoa; under whose direction he most frequently made his retreats; but sometimes under F. Alexander Saulo, a Barnabite (afterwards Bishop of Pavia), of whose virtue and prudence he had from experience the highest opinion. The first retreat and general confession which he made with this holy director, in 1568, the saint ever after called his conversion to God: so great was the spiritual profit which he reaped from it. But St Charles's ordinary confessor was Mr Gryffydd Roberts, a Welshman, a canon and theologian of the great church. A priest, from once hearing the saint's confession, might learn the most perfect lessons of his duties in all his actions; nor could those who had any acquaintance with his interior sufficiently admire the purity of his conscience, the wonderful light with which he discerned the least failings, or the fervour of his compunction and the sincerity of his humility, by which he esteemed himself the last of creatures, and of all others the most unfaithful and ungrateful to God. It happened once that in giving the holy communion at Brescia, by the fault of him who served at mass, he let the host fall; for which, in the deepest compunction and humiliation, he fasted most rigorously eight days, and abstained four days from saying mass. Except on this occasion he never omitted to say mass every day, even in his journeys and the greatest hurries of business, unless in extreme fits of illness, and then he at least received every day the holy communion. Out of respect and devotion to the adorable sacrifice, he always kept a rigorous silence (unless some important business intervened) from the evening prayer and meditation till the next after mass and his long thanksgiving. He prepared himself to offer the sacrifice by the sacrament of penance, and by many vocal and mental prayers; and used to say that it was unbecoming a priest to apply his mind to any temporal business before that great duty.

He always recited the divine office on his knees with his head bare, and his soul seemed all the while absorbed in God. The better to fix his attention, he never said any part of it by heart, but read it all in the breviary; which practice he recommended to all his clergy. He never

would be excused from any part of it in any sickness, how grievous soever, except the day before he died; and on that would have his chaplain recite it by him upon his knees, and attended to it with great devotion. He always said each part as near as might be to the canonical hour to which it corresponded; but on Sundays and holidays sung it all in choir in the great church, and passed there the greatest part of those days after the public office on his knees before a private altar. He had an extraordinary devotion to the Blessed Virgin, under whose patronage he put all his colleges: he had a singular devotion to St Ambrose and the other saints of his church, and had a great veneration for holy relics. He carried always about him, among others in a gold cross, a particle of the true cross of Christ and a small image of St Ambrose. He always kept with great respect a little picture of Bishop Fisher,<sup>1</sup> who was put to death for his religion under Henry VIII in England. The passion of Christ was a constant object of his devotion and meditations. At Rome he frequently spent five hours together on his knees in the chapel of the holy pillar, in the Church of St Praxedes, and so in other places of devotion; sometimes whole days or nights. Having once passed the night in the Church of St Sebastian at the Catacombs, he spent the day following in that of St Agnes. But what was most astonishing and edifying was the extraordinary exterior and interior recollection with which he prayed. His extreme care that neither persons nor business (unless in some pressing necessity) should interrupt or disturb him at that time, and his watchfulness over his eyes and all his senses, made it easy for his soul to remain totally absorbed in the divine presence; and condemned those who, by neglecting these precautions, and the due preparation of their souls, present themselves before God rather to mock him than to pray. The foot of the altar was the centre of this saint's delights, as he sometimes called it. When he was drawn away he left his heart there in desire to continue praying to God without interruption the homage of praise and love, and imploring his mercy. He never said any prayer or performed any religious ceremony with precipitation, whatever business of importance he had upon his hands, how much soever he was pressed for time, or how long soever his functions continued, which was sometimes from morning till late in the night. In giving audience, and in the greatest hurry of exterior affairs, his very countenance, all his words, and his modesty showed his mind to be perfectly recollected in God, the centre of his heart, his repose, strength, and comfort. From this spirit of prayer, and the ardent love of God which burned in his breast, his words infused a certain spiritual joy into others, gained their hearts, and kindled in them a strong desire of persevering in virtue, and cheerfully suffering all things for its sake. One word spoken by him frequently so animated slothful or desponding priests that they

<sup>1</sup> Now St John Fisher, martyr, canonized with Blessed Thomas More, 1935.

counted labours their gain, and braved dangers without fear. St Philip Neri testified that he once saw the saint's countenance shining with a heavenly brightness. The practice of always walking in the divine presence he strongly recommended as the principal means of attaining to Christian virtue. To a gentleman who begged he would prescribe him the rules of advancing in piety, he gave this answer, "He who desires to make any progress in the service of God must begin every day of his life with new ardour, must keep himself in the presence of God as much as possible, and must have no other view or end in all his actions but the divine honour."

The saint, who laboured so strenuously for the sanctification of his own soul, began the reformation of his diocese by the regulation of his own family; including the vicars and officers of their courts, it consisted of about a hundred persons, the greatest part being clergymen whom he employed in his own affairs and in those of his diocese. All the priests were obliged to go to confession once a week, the others at least once a month, and to communicate at the archbishop's hands. The priests said mass every day; all assisted every day at regular prayers at night and morning, meditations, and pious reading; abstained from flesh all Wednesdays and all Advent; fasted many vigils besides those of precept; and on fast-days had no regular collation, but those that called for it were allowed to take an ounce and a half of bread. No person in his family was ever to expect any benefice from him, so much did he dread the danger of simony stealing into anyone's intention in serving him. When one of them had obtained a small benefice from his grand vicar, St Charles discharged him, though he had a good opinion of his learning and virtue, and afterwards recommended him to another bishop. All were allowed handsome salaries, and were strictly forbid to receive presents from anyone. Idleness was banished his house, and those who at any time were not employed were obliged to read the lives of saints or other pious books. His household was a most regular community, and all dined together in a common refectory. Out of the clergy that composed his family, twelve became eminent bishops and many were employed by popes in quality of nuncios, and in other great posts in the government of the church. Ormanetto, his grand vicar (who was afterwards Bishop of Padua), had two other assistants who were also grand vicars; for St Charles established a vicariate, that things might be done with deliberation and counsel, which many other bishops imitated. He also appointed sixty foraneous or country vicars (whose authority and commission was limited by particular mandates); these were mostly the rural deans; they held frequent conferences, and inspected the behaviour of the curates under their jurisdiction, admonished them of their faults, and, if necessary, informed the archbishop or vicar-general.

The diocese of Milan, when the saint arrived in it, with regard to

ignorance and disorders, was in the most deplorable condition. The great truths of salvation were little known or understood, and religious practices were profaned by gross abuses and disgraced by superstition. The sacraments were generally neglected, the priests scarce knew how to administer them, and were slothful, ignorant, and debauched, and the monasteries were full of disorder. St Charles, by six provincial councils and eleven diocesan synods, also by many pastoral instructions and mandates, made excellent regulations for the reformation of the manners both of the clergy and people, which all zealous pastors have since regarded as a finished model, and have studied to square their conduct by them. Preaching being the means established by God for the conversion of souls, and the principal obligation of a pastor, St Charles applied himself to it with an unwearyed zeal, though everything in this function cost him much time and pains. A natural impediment in his speech seemed to disqualify him for it; yet this he overcame by much labour and attention.<sup>1</sup> The composition also cost him a great deal of study, though an excellent judgment compensated this difficulty. That liveliness of genius, those sprightly thoughts, witty turns, and beautiful flowers which we admire in the Basils and Chrysostoms seemed not to be his talent; but zeal, sincere piety, and a thorough acquaintance with the lessons and motives of Christian virtue, could not fail to qualify him for this function. His sermons were solid and pathetic, and he spoke with a vehemence which strongly affects a soul, and with an unction which always penetrates the heart. He preached every Sunday and holiday, and often in his visitations two or three times a day. The saint's zeal in procuring that all children and others throughout his diocese should be perfectly instructed in the catechism or Christian doctrine was fruitful in expedients to promote and perpetuate this most important duty of religion. Not content with strictly enjoining all parish priests to give public catechism every Sunday and holiday, he established everywhere, under admirable regulations, schools of the Christian doctrine, which amounted to the number of seven hundred and forty, in which were three thousand and forty catechists and forty thousand and ninety-eight scholars, as Giussano testifies.

He associated several pious ladies of Milan in regular exercises of devotion and Christian perfection, by whose examples others were engaged to spend much time devoutly in churches, to assist at all the sermons they could, and to be always taken up with serious employments, and withdrawn from that fatal sloth and round of dangerous amusements which many seem to look upon as a privilege of their rank; as if this could make void the maxims of the gospel, or exempt any Christian from the obligation of his baptismal engagements. These sacred vows, made by everyone at

<sup>1</sup> See Giussano in his life; and especially Carolus a basilica St Petri in St Caroli vita, c. 9, et lib. vii. c. 24, and Card. Frederic Borromeo, lib. de sacris oratoribus, p. 24. Saxius in Praefat, in homilia St Caroli &c.

the font, St Charles inculcated and induced persons to renew them frequently in a solemn manner with incredible fruit.

In 1567 the saint had a contest with the officers of justice. Certain lay persons who lived in public adultery, or kept concubines and could not be reclaimed by remonstrances, were imprisoned by his order. The senate threatened the serjeants of the archiepiscopal court for this action; and one of the king's judges caused their barigel or provost to be apprehended and punished in a public square with three strappados. The archbishop treated with the magistrates with great calmness and meekness; but after much deliberation declared the judge, the king's fiscal, the notary, and jailer excommunicated for having seized and punished an officer of the ecclesiastical court. Philip II, to whom both parties made their complaint, ordered the affair to be left to the pope's decision; to whom a senator was sent as deputy to plead the cause, and the Duke of Albuquerque, Governor of Milan, expressed an extreme displeasure at the treatment of the archbishop's officer. In the meantime, St Charles set out in October to perform the visitation of the three valleys of Levantine, Bregno, and Riparie, subject to the three Swiss cantons of Uri, Switz, and Underwald; for the see of Milan is extended in the Alps as far as Mount St Goddard's. Not to give umbrage to the temporal sovereignties, he entreated each to send a deputy to accompany him through their territories, which they did in a very obliging manner. These valleys had been, as it were, abandoned by former archbishops, were full of disorders, and the priests there were more corrupt than the laity. The saint travelled through snows and torrents, and over rocks which were almost inaccessible, having iron spikes on his shoes to climb them, and suffering with joy cold, hunger, thirst, and continual weariness. He preached and catechised everywhere, displaced the ignorant and scandalous priests, and put in their room others endowed with learning, zeal, and piety, who were capable of restoring the faith and morals of the people to their original purity. In some corners of his diocese the Zuinglian heresy had got footing; to them he made his way through incredible difficulties, reconciled many to the church, and settled all this northern part of his diocese in very good order.

In 1568 he took in hand the reformation of the Humiliati, a religious Order of which he was the protector. Their institute was founded by certain gentlemen of Milan in 1134, who, with the consent of their wives, made religious vows. They adopted the rule of St Bennet, with certain particular constitutions, and their Order was approved by Innocent III in 1200. In the beginning of the sixteenth century they fell into such relaxations that in ninety monasteries they had only a hundred and seventy monks; the superiors, who were called provosts, spending the revenues and living at discretion. St Charles procured two briefs from the pope, by which he was empowered to ordain and execute what he thought

necessary for their reformation; and he published regulations for that purpose in a general chapter of the Order which he assembled at Cremona. The monks received them willingly; but the provosts and lay-brothers obstinately refused to submit to them. On another occasion he obliged a bishop to come from an embassy, in which he was employed by his prince, to the council, and even to quit his secular embassy and reside in his diocese. Hearing that one of his suffragans had said in company that he had nothing to do, the saint sent to him a prefect of his household to represent to him the necessities of his flock and the obligations of his charge. The bishop answered him coldly that Cardinal Borromeo required too much. The saint was extremely grieved at his insensibility and neglect, and wrote him a letter of several leaves, in which he summed up various obligations of the episcopal charge, repeating almost after each of them, " Shall a bishop ever say that he had nothing to do? "

The tranquillity which St Charles had for some time enjoyed stirred up the malice of the enemy of souls, and the storms which were formerly raised against the saint were renewed with greater fury than ever, upon the following occasion. The collegiate Church of St Mary de la Scala, so called from the foundress, Beatrice de la Scala, wife of Barnaby Visconti, lord of Milan, enjoyed great privileges and exemptions, which had been obtained from the apostolic see by Francis Sforza II, Duke of Milan, a munificent benefactor. The conduct of some of these canons not being conformable to their state, St Charles consulted able canonists at Milan, and the pope himself, who all answered him that he had a right, in quality of archbishop, to make the visitation of this church, and in case of misdemeanours to proceed against any of the clergy belonging to it. The archbishop therefore went to the church in solemnity to make a canonical visitation; but was thrust from the door by the canons, and the cross which was carried before him and which in the tumult he had taken into his own hands, was shot at. One of their party caused a bell to be rung; then declared that the archbishop had incurred suspension and other censures for having violated the privileges of their church. The grand vicar upon the spot pronounced a sentence of excommunication against the authors of this insult; which the archbishop confirmed the next day in the great church, after having spent a long time in prayer at the foot of the altar. Most of the king's judges and the senate warmly espoused the cause of these canons, and sent the most virulent invectives against the archbishop to the King of Spain, accusing him of ambition and high treason in invading the king's rights, this church being under the royal patronage. The governor of Milan wrote to Pope Pius V in the strongest terms, threatening to banish the cardinal as a traitor. The pope answered him that nothing could be more glorious to the cardinal than to suffer banishment and death in the faithful discharge of his duty, and in labour-

ing to exterminate vice and abuses from the sanctuary, and that the devil had stirred up this persecution to hinder the good effect of the archbishop's zealous endeavours and upright intentions. Nevertheless, his holiness was very reserved in declaring in favour of the cardinal, and it is incredible how virulent and outrageous his enemies at Milan were in their invectives. The saint never spoke of any of them but with regard and tenderness; and in justifying his conduct to the pope and King of Spain discovered his charity towards his persecutors. All this time he ceased not to pray and weep for them, and to beg of God that no resentment might find place in his heart. At length the king wrote to the governor, ordering him to repeal an edict which he had published injurious to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and to support the archbishop; saying he was much obliged to him for the trouble he took for the reformation of the canons of Scala, which undertaking he begged he would accomplish. Hereupon the governor was reconciled to the saint; and the provost of the canons, who had been the least guilty, begged and received absolution from the censures. The canons persisted some time obstinate; but at length submitted, and were absolved by the saint. The pope insisted that the most guilty persons who had shot at the cross should be punished in an exemplary manner; but by many earnest solicitations the saint at length obtained their pardon.

Before this affair was concluded by the king's letter to the governor, an attempt was made upon the life of the saint, whose preservation was owing to a visible miracle.

The harvest having failed in 1569, the country was afflicted the following year with great scarcity; under which calamity St Charles, by his care and immense charities, procured abundant supplies for the relief of the poor throughout his whole diocese. That year he assisted the Duke of Albuquerque at his death; and at length succeeded in almost abolishing the disorders of the Carnival or Shrovetide, and turning the attention of the people to religious processions, prayer, and compunction at that season. To extirpate the custom of profaning the holy name of God or sentences of the holy scripture, the saint armed himself with all his zeal and had recourse to various pious institutions. Upon the death of St Pius V in 1572, St Charles concurred strenuously to the election of Cardinal Buoncampagno, who took the name of Gregory XIII, is famous for the institution of many colleges, for the propagation of the faith, and surpassed, if possible, his two predecessors in his esteem for our saint, whom he detained some time at Rome to take his advice; and he appointed him apostolic visitor of the dioceses of all his suffragans. In 1575 St Charles went to Rome with the most edifying devotion to gain the jubilee, and in the following year opened it at Milan. With all his zeal he was not able to hinder the exhibition of profane diversions of tilts and tournaments that very year. Whilst the people were taken up in them he clearly foretold

the plague, which broke out before they were over. The news of this calamity reached the saint at Lodi, whither he was gone to assist the bishop of that see at his death, as it was his custom to do toward all his suffragans. The governor fled to Vigevano, and all the rest of the nobility left the town. St Charles made haste thither, visited the pesthouse, whither the infected were sent by the magistrates, and provided both the sick and the poor with every succour spiritual and corporeal. According to his custom in all difficulties, he consulted his vicars and canonists whether he was obliged to remain with the infected or to withdraw to some other part of his diocese. They answered him with warm solicitations in the negative, entreating him not to expose his life, which was at that time of infinite importance, both to the sick and to those parts of his diocese which were not visited with that calamity. But St Charles proved to them that a pastor, who is obliged to lay down his life for his flock, must not abandon them in the time of danger. All granted this was the more perfect. And is not a bishop, said the saint, obliged to choose what is most perfect? Sin being the cause of scourges, he strongly exhorted the people to have recourse to the divine mercy by humble penance, and he redoubled his prayers and austerities. In three general processions he walked barefoot, having on a purple cope, as in times of penance, with a halter about his neck and a crucifix in his hands, from which he seemed never to turn his eyes, which were drowned in tears. Thus he offered himself a victim for the sins of the people. He preached almost every day, and never ceased admonishing his fellow labourers to contemn life in such a cause, himself exhorting the sick and administering the sacraments. For the relief of those that were destitute, he melted down all his plate and gave all his furniture, even the straw bed on which he lay, taking his rest on the boards. The number of priests, chiefly of his own clergy, whom he at first appointed to attend the sick not being sufficient, he assembled the superiors of the religious communities, and, begging their concurrence, made them a most pathetic discourse, in which he shows how great a happiness it was for any to lose their lives (which are always uncertain and short) in such a cause of the most noble charity, though the danger was not so great as was commonly imagined, and they were under the divine protection.<sup>1</sup> Such was the effect of this zealous discourse that about twenty-eight priests immediately presented themselves out of that body, and the saint allotted them their diet and lodgings in his own palace. The magistrates found fault with his numerous processions and assemblies of devotion, for fear of spreading the contagion. This dreadful distemper, after raging four months, began to abate in November, and quite ceased about the beginning of the ensuing year. The saint appointed a public solemn thanksgiving,

<sup>1</sup> See this discourse extant among his homilies, t. i. hom. xi. p. 81, with Saxius's note; also Carolus a basilica St Petri in vitâ St Caroli. lib. iv. c. 6.

and 'three days' prayer for such as had died during the pestilence. The two governors who had succeeded Albuquerque gave the saint much to suffer, chiefly on account of his abolishing the extravagances of Shrovetide and of the first Sunday in Lent; and on account of the processions he had made during the pestilence; to which they were stirred up by incorrigible sinners and persons who were enemies to all reformation of manners, as Giussano shows at large.<sup>1</sup> After the death of the latter of these governors, in 1580, the King of Spain did the saint justice, and Pope Gregory XIII, full of admiration at the wisdom and apostolic spirit which appeared in his whole conduct, approved of all his regulations and commended his zeal; also the Duke of Terra Nuova, the fourth governor of Milan, from the time of our saint's promotion lived constantly in good intelligence with the saint and often assisted at his sermons.

St Charles made twice the visitation of his whole diocese and once of his province: he took a journey into the Valteline, and into the country of the Grisons, where he animated the Catholics to the practice of piety and converted many Zuinglianists. The diocese of Milan is filled with monuments of his charity and zeal, and in that city itself he founded a convent of Capuchinesses (in which a daughter of his uncle, John Baptist Borromeo, embraced that austere Order, and died in the odour of sanctity), one of Ursulines, for the instruction of poor girls, who were educated there gratis; a hospital for beggars, into which all the poor were received; another of Convalescents who were dismissed out of the great hospital, &c. After he had established the college of the Jesuits at Milan, in which grammar, philosophy, and theology are taught, he committed a college which he founded for the Switzers, his six seminaries (three in the city and three in other parts of his diocese), and all the other houses which he instituted, to the care of his Oblats; except a house at Pavio, which he gave to the regular clerks of Somasca, so called from a place of that name between Bergamo and Milan, where their founder, St Jerom Æmiliani, a nobleman of Venice, established their chief seminary. Though the saint preferred public and general duties, as preaching, to those which regarded only private persons, yet he spent much time in the direction of particulars, in which his prudence was most remarkable. He was very severe in examining, and much upon his guard in believing visions and ecstasies, especially in women, whose imagination is easily susceptible of impressions: on such occasions he recommended the practice of humility and solid virtues. He was no less strict in the scrutiny of miracles and relics, and exploded all those that were not authentic; but visited other holy relics with singular devotion, and translated and adorned the shrines of many saints. It was to him, as he often expressed, a singular pleasure to assist dying persons.

<sup>1</sup> Giussano, lib. v. c. 1, p. 402; lib. v. c. 7, p. 444; lib. vi. c. 2, p. 471; lib. vi. c. 5; lib. vi. c. 9 et 10.

In 1583, hearing the Duke of Savoy was fallen sick at Vercelli and given over by his physicians, he posted thither and found him, as it was thought, at the last gasp. The duke, seeing him come into his chamber, cried out, "I am cured." The saint gave him the holy communion the next day, and ordered the forty hours' prayer for his recovery. The duke was restored to his health, as he was persuaded, by the prayers of St Charles, and after the saint's death sent a silver lamp to be hung up at his tomb in memory of this benefit.

For closer solitude St Charles sometimes used to make his retreats at Camaldoli and other places; but none seemed so agreeable to his devotion as Mount Varalli, situate in the diocese of Novara, upon the borders of Switzerland, a famous place of devotion to the sufferings of Christ, the mysteries of which are curiously carved in thirty-eight chapels of good architecture, besides the great church, which is served by Franciscans. Thither St Charles went in 1584 to make his annual retreat and confession, having with him F. Adorno, who proposed to him the points of his meditations. He had before clearly foretold to several persons that he should not remain long with them; and in this retreat redoubled his fervour in his austerities and devotions, and seemed more than ordinarily absorbed in God, and disengaged from his body and all earthly ties. The abundance of his tears obliged him often to stop in saying mass; and a bishop deposed that he saw his countenance one day at the altar darting a ray of bright light, which seemed to proceed from that interior light which filled his soul, and to be a presage of that glory with which he was going to be crowned. He spent most time in the chapel called Of the Prayer in the Garden, and in that Of our Redeemer in the Sepulchre; endeavouring to put himself in a state of death with him by a perfect renunciation of all sentiments and thoughts of self-love; and praying that whatever remained in him of the life of Adam might be entirely destroyed by the death of the Son of God. On the 24th of October he was taken ill of a tertian ague, but concealed it; on the 26th he had a second fit, and, by order of F. Adorno, abridged the hours of his prayers, had a little straw laid on the boards on which he lay, and took a panado, suffering the bread to be toasted, which he ate with water, but would not use any salt or butter. On the fifth day of his retreat he spent eight hours on his knees with such fervour and compunction that he could not be persuaded he had been near so long; after this he made his annual confession, and the next day, it being the 29th of October, he went to Arona and there alighted at the curate's, according to his custom, not at the palace, which had been seized by the governors, but was afterwards restored to him without his solicitations. Having taken a mess of panado he went, though it was night, across the lake of Ascona, to finish the foundation of a college there, though the plague was then in that town. He took a little rest in the boat,

and dispatched his business the next morning; he returned by water to Conobbio, though in a fit of the ague. The next day he went to Arona; but, it being the eve of All-Saints, fasted as usual, except that he took the drugs prescribed him by his physician. His cousin, Renatus Borromeo, could not induce him to lodge at the castle, but he lay at the Jesuits and rested well that night, and rose to his prayers at two in the morning. After his confession he said mass at seven; his physicians persuaded him not to set out, that being the day of the return of his ague, and they ordered him to drink a great quantity of ptisan. He obeyed them; but the ptisan had a contrary effect to what they expected it, being too strong for a constitution accustomed to no other fare than bread and water, or pulse. His ptisan and drugs were to him cordials instead of coolers, and his fever was much increased by them, so that it became from that time continued and never after left him.

On All-Souls'-day he arrived at Milan in a litter, called in the ablest physicians, and gave himself up to their direction, which he scrupulously followed in every point. They declared his distemper very dangerous; but the next day, finding his fever much abated, had great hopes of his recovery. The saint gave no signs of joy at this news, and continued his pious exercises, chiefly on the passion of Christ, sometimes by himself, sometimes with F. Adorno, F. Charles Bascape, and other devout persons. In the next paroxysm of his fever the physicians found the state of his health desperate; he received the news with a surprising serenity, received the viaticum and extreme unction with great devotion, and with these words, *Ecce venio*, "Behold I come," expired in the first part of the night between the 3rd and 4th of November. He left by his will his plate to his cathedral, his library to his canons, and his manuscripts to the Bishop of Vercelli, and declared the general hospital his heir. His funeral he ordered to be made as privately as might be, and chose for his burial-place a vault near the choir, with this inscription, which remains there to this day, in a small marble stone: "Charles, Cardinal of the title of St Praxedes, Archbishop of Milan, desiring to be recommended to the frequent prayers of the clergy, people, and the devout sex, living, chose for himself this monument." There follows this addition: "He lived forty-six years, one month, and one day; governed this church twenty-four years, eight months, twenty-four days, and died November the 4th, in 1584." In 1601 the venerable Cardinal Baronius, confessor to Clement VIII, sent to the clergy of Milan an order of his holiness to change the anniversary *mass de Requiem*, which the saint had founded to perpetuity in the great hospital, into a mass of the saint; and St Charles was solemnly canonized by Paul V in 1610. His sacred remains are now deposited in a rich subterraneous chapel, just under the cupola in the great church, and laid in a crystal shrine of an immense value. The altar in this chapel is of solid silver; plates of silver

cover the walls of a considerable part of the vault, and a great number of large silver and gold lamps burn there night and day, not to mention the great images and other donaries of gold and silver with which this chapel is filled, by the devotion of many distant princes, cardinals, and bishops. Besides the richest vestments and like ornaments, Giussano tells us that in eight years the donaries here amounted to above the value of one hundred and fifty thousand crowns of gold. Thus is he honoured on earth who despised the whole world for Christ.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 4:*

ST BRINSTAN, Bishop of Winchester in 941; he washed the feet of a number of poor every day, afterwards serving them at table: ST CLARUS, martyr, a noble Englishman who preached Christ in France: ST CHARLES BORROMEO, Archbishop of Milan, 1584: ST JOANNICIUS, Abbot, who, after a dissolute youth, became one of the most illustrious saints of the monastic order: ST VITALIS and ST AGRICOLA, martyred at Bologna in 300, the latter a gentleman of that place and the former his slave, who received the crown of martyrdom before his master.

### NOVEMBER 5

#### ST BERTILLE, ABBESS OF CHELLES (A.D. 692)

[From her life written soon after her death in Mabillon, *Act. Ben.* t. iii. p. 21; *Du Plessis, Hist. de Meaux*, lib. i. n. 47, 48, 50.]

ST BERTILLE was born of one of the most illustrious families in the territory of Soissons, in the reign of Dagobert I, and by her piety acquired the true nobility of the children of God. From her infancy she preferred the love of God to that of creatures, shunned as much as possible the company and amusements of the world, and employed her time in serious duties and chiefly in holy prayer. As she grew up, by relishing daily more and more the sweetness of conversing with God, she learned perfectly to despise the world and earnestly desired to renounce it. Not daring to discover this inclination to her parents, she first opened herself to St Ouen, by whom she was encouraged in her resolution. Self-love early disguises itself in every shape, and the devil often transforms himself into an angel of light. Not to be deceived through precipitation and rashness in so important a choice as that of a state of life, impartial advice, prayer, careful self-examination and mature deliberation are necessary. These means having been employed, the saint's parents were made acquainted with her desire, which God inclined them not to oppose. They conducted her to Jouarre, a great monastery in Brie, four leagues from Meaux, founded not long before, about the year 630, by Ado, the elder brother of St Ouen, who took the monastic habit there with many other young noblemen and established a nunnery in the neighbourhood, which became the principal house. St Thelchildes, a virgin of noble descent, who seems to have been educated or first professed in the monastery of Faremoutier, was the first

abbess of Jouarre, and governed that house till about the year 660. By her and her religious community St Bertille was received with great joy and trained up in the strictest practice of monastic perfection. Our saint, looking upon this solitude as a secure harbour, never ceased to return thanks to God for his infinite mercy in having drawn her out of the tempestuous ocean of the world: but was persuaded she could never deserve to become the spouse of Jesus Christ unless she endeavoured to follow him in the path of humiliation and self-denial. By her perfect submission to all her sisters she seemed everyone's servant, and in her whole conduct was a model of humility, obedience, regularity, and devotion. Though she was yet young, her prudence and virtue appeared consummate, and the care of entertaining strangers, of the sick, and of the children that were educated in the monastery was successfully committed to her. In all these employments she had acquitted herself with great charity and edification when she was chosen prioress to assist the abbess in her administration. In this office her tender devotion, her habitual sense of the divine presence, and her other virtues shone forth with new lustre, and had a wonderful influence in the direction of the whole community.

When St Bathildes, wife of Clovis II, munificently refounded the abbey of Chelles, which St Clotildis had instituted near the Marne, four leagues from Paris, she desired St Thelchildes to furnish this new community with a small colony of the most experienced and virtuous nuns of Jouarre, who might direct the novices in the rule of monastic perfection. Bertille was sent at the head of this holy company, and was appointed the first abbess of Chelles, in 646, or thereabouts. The reputation of the sanctity and prudence of our saint, and the excellent discipline which she established in this house, drew several foreign princesses thither. Among others Bede mentions Hereswith, Queen of the East-Angles. She was daughter of Hereic, brother or brother-in-law to St Edwin, King of Northumberland, and married the religious King Annas, with whose consent she renounced the world and, passing into France, in 646, became a nun at Chelles. Queen Bathildes, after the death of her husband in 655, was left regent of the kingdom during the minority of her son Clotaire III, but as soon as he was of age to govern, in 665, she retired hither, took the religious habit from the hands of St Bertille, obeyed her as if she had been the last sister in the house, and passed to the glory of the angels in 680. In this numerous family of holy queens, princesses, and virgins, no contests arose but those of humility and charity. The holy abbess, who saw two great queens every day at her feet, seemed the most humble and the most fervent among her sisters, and showed by her conduct that no one commands well or with safety who has not first learned, and is not always ready, to obey well.

St Bertille governed this great monastery for the space of forty-six

years with equal vigour and discretion. In her old age, far from abating her fervour, she strove daily to redouble it both in her penances and in her devotions. In these holy dispositions of fervour the saint closed her penitential life in 692.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 5:*

ST BERTILLE, Abbess of Chelles. In England the FEAST OF HOLY RELICS is kept on this date.

## NOVEMBER 6

### ST LEONARD, HERMIT, CONFESSOR (SIXTH AGE)

[His life published in Surius was written a considerable time after his death. Baronius, in his notes on the Martyrology, mentions another life of this saint which he saw in manuscript: several ancient monuments mention him.]

ST LEONARD, or LIENARD, was a French nobleman of great reputation in the court of Clovis I, and in the flower of his age was converted to the faith by St Remigius, probably after the battle of Tolbiac. Being instructed in the obligations of our heavenly warfare, wherein the prize of the victory is an assured crown of immortal glory, he resolved to lay aside all worldly pursuits, quitted the court, and became a constant disciple of St Remigius. The holy instructions and example of that saint made every day deeper impressions upon his tender soul, and Leonard seemed to have inherited the very spirit of his master, and to be animated with the same simplicity, disinterestedness, modesty, zeal, and charity. He preached the faith some time; but finding it very difficult to resist the king's importunities, who would needs call him to court, and burning with a desire of giving himself up entirely to the exercises of penance and contemplation, he retired privately into the territory of Orleans, where St Mesmin or Maximin governed the monastery of Micy (called afterwards St Mesmin's), which his uncle St Euspicius had founded, two leagues from the city, in 508. In this house St Leonard took the religious habit and inured himself to the fervent practices of regular discipline under the direction of St Mesmin and of St Lie or Lætus, a holy monk of that house, who afterwards died a hermit.

St Leonard himself aspiring after a closer solitude, with the leave of St Mesmin left his monastery, travelled through Berry, where he converted many idolaters, and coming into Limousin, chose for his retirement a forest four leagues from Limoges. Here, in a place called Nobiliac, he built himself an oratory, lived on wild herbs and fruits, and had for some time no other witness of his penance and virtues but God alone. His zeal and devotion sometimes carried him to the neighbouring churches, and some who by his discourses were inflamed with a desire of imitating his manner

of life joined him in his desert, and formed a community which, in succeeding times, out of devotion to the saint's memory, became a flourishing monastery, called first Noblat, afterwards St Leonard le Noblat. The reputation of his sanctity and miracles being spread very wide, the king bestowed on him and his fellow-hermits a considerable part of the forest where they lived. The saint, even before he retired to Micy, had been most remarkable for his charity toward captives and prisoners, and he laid himself out with unwearied zeal in affording them both corporeal and spiritual help and comfort, and he obtained of the governors the liberty of many. This was also the favourite object of his charity after he had discovered himself to the world in Limousin, and began to make frequent excursions to preach and instruct the people of that country. It is related that some were miraculously delivered from their chains by his prayers, and that the king, out of respect for his eminent sanctity, granted him a special privilege of sometimes setting prisoners at liberty; which about that time was frequently allowed to certain holy bishops and others. But the saint's chief aim and endeavours in this charitable employment were to bring malefactors and all persons who fell under this affliction to a true sense of the enormity of their sins, and to a sincere spirit of compunction and penance, and a perfect reformation of their lives. When he had filled up the measure of his good works, his labours were crowned with a happy death about the year 559, according to the new Paris Breviary. Many great churches in England of which he is the titular saint, and our ancient calendars, show his name to have been formerly no less famous in England. In a list of holidays published at Worcester in 1240, St Leonard's festival is ordered to be kept a half-holiday, with an obligation of hearing mass and a prohibition of labour except that of the plough. He was particularly invoked in favour of prisoners, and several miracles are ascribed to him. His name occurs in the Roman and other Martyrologies.

Solitude has always charms to the devout servant of God, because retirement from the world is very serviceable to his conversing with heaven. Solitude and silence settle and compose the thoughts; the mind augments its strength and vigour by rest and collection within itself, and in this state of serenity is most fit to reflect upon itself and its own wants, and to contemplate the mysteries of divine grace and love, the joys of heaven and the grounds of our hope. How shall a Christian who lives in the world practise this retirement? By not loving its spirit and maxims, by being as recollected as may be in the midst of business, and bearing always in mind that salvation is the most important and only affair; by shunning superfluous amusements and idle conversation and visits; and by consecrating every day some time, and a considerable part of Sundays and great festivals, to the exercises of religious

retirement, especially devout prayer, self-examination, meditation, and pious reading.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 6:*

ST ILTUTUS or ILTYD, a noble Briton, kinsman to King Arthur, who founded and governed the most famous monastery and school then in Britain: ST LEONARD, hermit, a French nobleman, converted by St Remigius; he lived only on wild herbs and fruit, and is invoked in favour of prisoners: another ST LEONARD, of Yandevre, lived as a hermit in the same age: ST WINOC, Abbot, famed for many miracles.

### NOVEMBER 7

## ST WILLIBRORD, CONFESSOR, FIRST BISHOP OF UTRECHT

(A.D. 738)

[From his life written by Alcuin, in two books, the one in prose, the other in verse, together with a homily, and an elegant poem in his honour; also Bede, lib. v.: Hist. c. 11, 12; and St Boniface, Ep. 97. See Batavia Sacra, p. 36; and Mabillon, Annal. Bened. t. i. lib. xviii. sec. 4; and Acta Sanct. Ord. St Bened. Sæc. 3, par. 1, p. 601; Calmet, Hist. de Lorraine, t. iii. pr. et t. i. app. Fabricius, Salutar. Luce Evang. c. 19, p. 442.]

ST WILLIBRORD was born in the kingdom of Northumberland towards the year 658, and placed by his virtuous parents, before he was seven years old, in the monastery of Ripon, which was at that time governed by St Wilfrid, its founder. Wilgris, our saint's father, retired also into a monastery, afterwards became a hermit, and in his old age founded and governed a small monastery between the ocean and the Humber. He is honoured among the saints in the monastery of Epternac and in the English calendars. Alcuin has left us an account of his life. Willibrord, by carrying the yoke of our Lord with fervour from his infancy, found it always easy and sweet, and the better to preserve the first fruits which he had gathered, made his monastic profession when he was very young. He had made great progress in virtue and sacred learning when, out of a desire for further improvement, in the twentieth year of his age he went over into Ireland, with the consent of his abbot and brethren, where he joined St Egbert or Ecgbright, and the blessed Wigbert, who were gone thither before upon the same errand. In their company our saint spent twelve years in the study of the sacred sciences and in the most fervent exercise of all virtues. Though his constitution was weak, in fervour and exactness he outdid the most advanced: he was humble, modest, and of an easy obliging temper; and his whole conduct was regular and uniform. St Egbert had long entertained an ardent desire of going to preach the gospel to the inhabitants of those unhappy countries in which barbarism and idolatry still reigned without control, and he had chiefly Friesland or Lower Germany in his eye. But he was diverted from that apostolical design by persons of piety and authority, who engaged him to employ his zealous labours in the islands between Ireland and Scotland, in all which he settled the true manner of celebrating Easter, especially at Hii, where he died a little before Bede

wrote his history. St Egbert is honoured in the English Calendar on the 24th of April. Bede gives a most edifying account of his austere penance, devotion, zeal, and charity. His companion, the holy priest Wigbert, went in the meantime to Friesland; but after staying there two years came back without having met with any prospect of success. This disappointment did not discourage Egbert and other zealous promoters of this mission, but excited them the more earnestly to solicit the divine mercy with prayers and tears in favour of so many souls who were perishing eternally. Willibrord, who was then about thirty-one years of age and had been ordained priest a year before, expressed a great desire to be allowed by his superiors to undertake this laborious and dangerous charge. St Egbert, by the known zeal and great talents of our saint and by his cheerfulness, doubted not but God had reserved to him the conversion of that nation, and encouraged him in this zealous design. St Willibrord was joined by St Swidbert and ten other English monks in this mission.

The authors of *Batavia Sacra*<sup>1</sup> doubt not but our twelve missionaries landed at Catwic upon the sea, which was at the mouth of the Rhine before it was blocked up with sands, and thither the English were accustomed to export corn, even from the north, coasting part of their island. The British tower, as it was called, was built by the Romans at Catwic to defend this harbour. Pepin of Herstal, or the Big, who was at that time Duke of the French, received courteously St Willibrord and his companions. But Willibrord set out for Rome and cast himself at the feet of Pope Sergius, begging his apostolic blessing and authority to preach the gospel to idolatrous nations. The pope, charmed with his zeal and sanctity, granted him the most ample licences for that purpose, and gave him a great quantity of relics for the consecration of churches. With this treasure the saint returned with all possible expedition to his province, considering the pressing necessities and dangers of so many souls which called for his compassion and relief. St Swidbert was taken from him and ordained Bishop of the Borroctuarians, who seem to have inhabited the territory of Berg and the neighbouring country towards Cologne.

St Willibrord, with his ten other companions, under the protection of Pepin, preached the gospel with wonderful success in that part of Friesland that had been conquered by the French; so that after six years Pepin, by the advice of his bishops, sent the saint to Rome with strong letters of recommendation that he might be ordained bishop. His humility made him endeavour that some other should be pitched upon for that dignity, but he was not heard. Pope Sergius, who still sat in St Peter's chair, received him with great marks of honour, changed his name into that of Clement, with great solemnity ordained him Archbishop of the Frisons in St Peter's church and gave him the pallium, with authority to fix his see

<sup>1</sup> *Proleg.* § 7, p. 6.

in what part of the country he should think most convenient. The holy man stayed only fourteen days in Rome, being impatient to return to his flock, and regretting an hour's absence from them more than was necessary to procure them greater advantages. He came back to Utrecht the same year, 696, and chose that city for his residence, Pepin having bestowed on him the royal castle of Viltaburg which, as Bede assures us,<sup>1</sup> was at Utrecht. St Willibrord built at Utrecht the Church of our Saviour, in which he fixed his metropolitical see, says St Boniface,<sup>2</sup> and that of St Martin, though this latter he only restored, for it had been a church, but destroyed by the pagans.<sup>3</sup> The archbishop's indefatigable application to the conversion of souls seemed to prove that, with the new obligation he had received at his consecration of labouring to enlarge the kingdom of his Divine Master, he had acquired fresh strength and a considerable augmentation of his zeal. In the second year after his episcopal consecration, assisted by the liberality of Pepin and the abbess Irmina, who is said to have been daughter of Dagobert II, he founded, in 698, the abbey of Epternac in the diocese of Triers, and now in the duchy of Luxemburg,<sup>4</sup> which he governed to his death. Alcuin relates that the nunnery of Horrea, of which Irmina was abbess, had been delivered from a pestilence by water blessed by St Willibrord, and by his saying mass in the church. Pepin of Herstal before his death put away his concubine Alpais, by whom he had Charles Martel, and was reconciled to his wife Plectrudis, and in his last will, which is signed by Plectrudis, he recommended to St Willibrord his nephews (without any mention of his natural son Charles), and bestowed on our saint the village of Swestram, now Susteren, in the duchy of Juliers, near the Meuse, with which the holy man endowed a nunnery which he built there.<sup>5</sup>

Pepin of Herstal died in December 714. A little before his death, Charles Martel's son, Pepin the Short, afterwards King of France, was born, and baptized by St Willibrord, who on that occasion is related by Alcuin to have prophesied that the child would surpass in glory all his ancestors. Charles Martel in a short time became mayor of the palace, and approved himself equally the first general and statesman of his age. In 723 he settled upon the monastery which St Willibrord had erected at Utrecht to serve his cathedral all the royal revenues belonging to his castle there.<sup>6</sup> Of this monastery St Gregory was afterwards abbot; in succeeding times it was secularized. Several other donations of estates made by Charles Martel to several churches founded by our saint may be seen in Miræus and others. By a charter that prince conferred on him the royalties of the city of Utrecht with its dependencies and appurten-

<sup>1</sup> Bede, *Hist. lib. v. c. 12.*

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 97, ad Steph. Pap.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. See Boschartius, in *Diatribâ*, diss. 49.

<sup>4</sup> See the charter of Irmina in Miræus, *Donationes Piæ Belgic.*

<sup>5</sup> Brower. *Annal. Trevir. lib. vii.*; *Mabill. Annal. Bened. t. ii. lib. xix. § 72.*

<sup>6</sup> See his diploma in Heda, p. 28; *Le Cointe* and Miræus.

ances.<sup>1</sup> By such establishments our saint sought to perpetuate the work of God. Not content to have planted the faith in the country which the French had conquered, he extended his labours into West-Friesland, which obeyed Radbod, Prince or King of the Frisons, who continued an obstinate idolater; yet hindered not the saint's preaching to his subjects, and himself sometimes listened to him. The new apostle penetrated also into Denmark; but Ongend (perhaps Biorn), who then reigned there, a monster of cruelty rather than a man, was hardened in his malice, and his example had a great influence over his subjects. The man of God, however, for the first fruits of this country, purchased thirty young Danish boys, whom he instructed, baptized, and brought back with him. In his return he was driven by stress of weather upon the famous pagan island called Fositeland, now Amelandt, on the coast of Friesland, six leagues from Leuwarden, to the north, a place then esteemed by the Danes and Frisons as most sacred in honour of the idol Fosite. It was looked upon as an unpardonable sacrilege for anyone to kill any living creature in that island, to eat of anything that grew in it, or to draw water out of a spring there without observing the strictest silence. St Willibrord, to undeceive the inhabitants, killed some of the beasts for his companions to eat, and baptized three persons in the fountain, pronouncing the words aloud. The idolaters expected to see them run mad or drop down dead; and seeing no such judgment befall them, could not determine whether this was to be attributed to the patience of their god or to his want of power. They informed Radbod who, transported with rage, ordered lots to be cast three times a day for three days together, and the fate of the delinquents to be determined by them. God so directed it that the lot never fell upon Willibrord; but one of his company was sacrificed to the superstition of the people, and died a martyr for Jesus Christ.

The saint, upon leaving Amelandt, directed his course to Warckeren, one of the chief islands belonging to Zealand. His charity and patience made considerable conquests to the Christian religion there, and he established several churches. After the death of Radbod, which happened in 719, Willibrord was at full liberty to preach in every part of the country. He was joined in his apostolical labours, in 720, by St Boniface, who spent three years in Friesland, then went into Germany. Bede says, when he wrote his history in 731: "Willibrord, surnamed Clement, is still living, venerable for his old age, having been bishop thirty-six years, and sighing after the rewards of the heavenly life, after many conflicts in the heavenly warfare."<sup>2</sup> "He was," says Alcuin, "of a becoming stature, venerable in his aspect, comely in his person, graceful, and always cheerful in his speech and countenance, wise in his counsel, unwearied in preaching and all apostolic

<sup>1</sup> See this chapter in Willh. Heda, p. 88. See also Buchelius in Hedam and Alcuin, lib. ii. c. 51.  
<sup>2</sup> Bede, Hist. lib. v. c. 12.

functions, amidst which he was careful to nourish the interior life of his soul by assiduous prayer, singing of psalms, watching, and fasting." Alcuin, who wrote about fifty years after his death, assures us that this apostle was endowed with the gift of miracles, and relates that whilst he preached in the isle of Warckeren, where the towns of Flessingue and Middleburg are since built, going from village to village, he found in one of them a famous idol to which the people were offering their vows and sacrifices, and, full of holy zeal, threw it down and broke it in pieces. In the meantime an idolater, who was the priest and guardian of the idol, gave him a blow on the head with his backsword, with which, nevertheless, the saint was not hurt; and he would not suffer the assassin to be touched or prosecuted. But the unhappy man was soon after possessed with a devil and lost his senses. By the tears, prayers, and zealous labours of this apostle and his colleagues, the faith was planted in most parts of Holland, Zealand, and all the remaining part of the Netherlands, whither St Amand and St Lebwin had never penetrated; and the Frisons, till then a rough and most barbarous people, were civilized, and became eminent for virtue and the culture of arts and sciences. St Wulfran, Archbishop of Sens, and others, excited by the success of our saint's missions, were ambitious to share in so great a work under his direction. St Willibrord was exceeding cautious in admitting persons to holy orders, fearing lest one unworthy or slothful minister should defeat by scandal all the good which the divine mercy had begun for the salvation of many souls. It is also mentioned of him that he was very strict and diligent in examining and preparing thoroughly those whom he admitted to baptism, dreading the condemnation which those incur who, by sloth or facility, open a door to the profanation of our most tremendous mysteries. The schools which St Willibrord left at Utrecht were very famous.<sup>1</sup> Being at length quite broken with old age, he resigned the administration of his diocese to a coadjutor whom he ordained bishop, and in retirement prepared himself for eternity. He died, according to Pagi, in 739; according to Mabillon, in 740 or 741, and according to Mr Smith,<sup>2</sup> in 745; some adhering to Alcuin, others to Bede, &c. St Boniface says that St Willibrord spent fifty years in preaching the gospel,<sup>3</sup> which Mr Smith dates from his episcopal consecration, Mabillon<sup>4</sup> from his coming into Friesland, but others think these fifty years mean only thereabouts. Alcuin and Rabanus Maurus place his death on the 6th of November; but the Chronicle of Epternac, Usuard, Ado, and the Roman and Benedictin Martyrologies commemorate him on the 7th. He was buried, as he had desired, at his monastery of Epternac, and his relics are there enshrined at this day. The portative altar which he made use of for the celebration of the divine

<sup>1</sup> Dom. Rivet, *Hist. Littér.* t. iii. p. 449.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 97, ad Steph. II papam.

<sup>3</sup> In Bed. lib. v. c. 12, p. 194.

<sup>4</sup> Ap. Martenne, *Ampl. Collect.* t. iv. p. 505.

mysteries, in travelling through Friesland, Zealand, and Holland, is kept in the Benedictin abbey of our Lady ad Martyres, at Triers.<sup>1</sup>

He whose life is regular and methodical, and who is solicitous and earnest, finds time to do with ease and without a single thought of it more business than seems credible to the slothful. This every Christian may experience; and, without the obligations of the pastoral charge, everyone owes so many and so great duties, both to others and himself that, unless he is supinely slothful and wilfully blind, he will find business enough constantly upon his hands to employ earnestly all his moments.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 7:*

BLESSED JOHN GABRIEL PERBOYRE, martyr: ST PROSDECIMUS, first Bishop of Padua: ST WILLIBRORD, first Bishop of Utrecht, 738: and ST WERENFRID, priest, an English monk who followed St Willibord into Friesland, preaching the Gospel.

## NOVEMBER 8

### THE FOUR CROWNED BROTHERS, MARTYRS (A.D. 304)

[See Bosius and Aringhi, in *Româ Subterranea*, lib. iii. c. 8; Baronius, *Annot. in Martyr.*; Tillem. t. v. *Persec. de Diocl.* art 49. Their acts are of no account.]

FOUR brothers in the persecution of Diocletian, employed in offices of trust and honour at Rome, were apprehended for declaring against the worship of idols, and whipped with scourges loaded with plummets of lead till they expired in the hands of their tormentors. They were buried on the Lavican Way, three miles from Rome, and were at first called the Four Crowned Martyrs; their names were Severus, Severianus, Carpophorus, and Victorius. Pope Gregory the Great mentions an old church of the four crowned martyrs in Rome. Pope Leo IV, in 841, caused the church to be repaired and the relics of these martyrs to be translated thither out of the cemetery on the Lavican Way. When this church had been consumed by fire, Paschal II rebuilt it; upon which occasion the relics of these martyrs were discovered under the altar in two rich urns, the one of porphyry, the other of serpentine marble, deposited in a stone vault. The new altar was built upon the same spot; and these relics were again found in the same situation under Paul V. This church is an ancient title of a cardinal-priest.

The rage of tyrants, who were masters of the world, spread the faith which they vainly endeavoured, by fighting against heaven, to extinguish. The martyrs who died for it sealed it with their blood, and gave a testimony to Jesus Christ which was, of all others, the strongest and most persuasive.

<sup>1</sup> See Molan, in *Indicul. SS. Belgii.* and F. Brower, *Annal. Trevir.* lib. vii.

Other Christians who fled became the apostles of the countries whither they went; whence St Austin compares them to torches which, if you attempt to put them out by shaking them, are kindled and flame so much the more. The martyrs, by the meekness and fervour of their lives and their constancy in resisting evil to death, converted an infidel world and disarmed the obstinacy of the most implacable enemies of the truth. But what judgments must await those Christians who, by the scandal of their sloth and worldly spirit, dishonour their religion, blaspheme Christ, withdraw even the faithful from the practice of the gospel, and tempt a Christian world to turn infidel?

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 8:*

THE FOUR CROWNED BROTHERS, martyred in the persecution of Diocletian; they were whipped with scourges loaded with lead until they died: ST GODFREY, Bishop of Amiens, whose father, a widower, had taken the monastic habit; this saint in youth gave even his meals to the poor: ST WILLEHAD, Bishop of Bremen and apostle of Saxony, an Englishman noted for austerity of life and readiness in obedience.

#### NOVEMBER 9

### THE DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR (COMMONLY CALLED ST JOHN LATERAN)

FROM the beginning of the world altars were erected for offering sacrifices to God, and the places which were deputed for this supreme act of religion were always looked upon as sacred. Abel, Noë, Abraham, and the other patriarchs raised altars in retired and sanctified places, where they sometimes assembled their families or tribes to pay to God the most solemn religious worship. Abraham, to make the place more awful and retired, planted a grove round his altar at Beersabe,<sup>1</sup> and went thither religiously with his family to offer prayers and sacrifices. Jacob erected an altar of stone at Bethel, pouring oil upon it, called the place the house of God, and vowed to pay to him the tithes of all his possessions.<sup>2</sup> Christians had from the beginning chambers or oratories in private houses, set apart for their religious assemblies and sacrifices, as appears from St Paul,<sup>3</sup> and from the Upper Room, in which the apostles are frequently mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles to have assembled,<sup>4</sup> which seems to have been in the house of John Mark.<sup>5</sup> In the time of St John the Evangelist the place for the assembly of the faithful with the bishop is called the church or Ecclesia. St Clement of Rome says that God had appointed places to be appropriated to his worship. St Ignatius often mentions one altar in every church and one bishop. Tertullian calls the place of the assembly in which the baptismal renunciations were made, the Eucharist offered, &c., Ecclesia, or the church, and the house of God. The heathen author of the dialogue

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxi. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Acts i. 13, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xxviii. 18, 22; xxxv. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xii. 12.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 22.

called Philopatris mentions the Christians' place of religious assemblies. Lampridius, in the life of Alexander Severus, reports that that emperor adjudged to the Christians a place for their religious worship which the victuallers claimed. St Gregory Thaumaturgus built many churches, as St Gregory of Nyssa relates in his life. That ancient doctor, in his canonical epistle, and St Dionysius of Alexandria, distinctly mention the church. St Cyprian often speaks of the church, which he sometimes calls the Lord's house, or Dominicum. Eusebius says that during the peace which the church enjoyed from the persecution of Valerian to that of Diocletian, the ancient churches were not large enough to contain the faithful, "and therefore they erected from the foundation new ones more ample and spacious in every city." Origen, indeed, Minutius Felix, and Lactantius say Christians had no temples or altars; but evidently mean for idols and bloody sacrifices, like those of the heathens. Lactantius himself speaks of a Christian church in Phrygia, which the heathens burnt with the whole assembly in it. Gildas and Bede testify that the churches were demolished in Britain in the persecution of Diocletian, and rebuilt when it was over. St Optatus says there were forty churches in Rome before the last persecution which were taken away, but restored to the Christians by Maxentius. It is a very ancient tradition at Rome that the house of the senator Pudens was converted into a church by St Peter or, rather, that he established an oratory in that palace.

Constantine the Great, by his victory over Maxentius, gained on the 28th of October in 312, became master of Italy and Africa, and, under his protection and the favour of Licinius, who reigned in the East till the year 323, the Christians began to build everywhere sumptuous churches. That of Tyre, begun by the citizens under the direction of Paulinus, their bishop, in 313, is minutely described by Eusebius. The persecution, which Licinius renewed in 319, put a stop to such works in the East; but after his defeat, and especially after the council of Nice, Constantine built and adorned many churches at his own expense. Among these, Eusebius mentions a most magnificent one at Nicomedia, another at Antioch in the form of an octagon, which, from its rich ornaments, was called the Golden Church; others at Jerusalem and in several other parts of Palestine, and at Constantinople. The great Church of Sancta Sophia there, dedicated to Christ, the increased Wisdom, which was magnificently rebuilt by Justinian, was first founded by Constantine, and finished by Constantius, in 360. Constantine built also at Constantinople the beautiful Church of the Twelve Apostles which, as Eusebius describes it, "was vastly high; yet had all its walls covered with marble, its roof overlaid with gold, and the outside covered with gilded brass instead of tiles." Among a great number of churches which this pious emperor built, the principal is that of our Saviour, which he founded on Mount Cœlio, in

Rome. It stood upon the spot, and was built in part with the materials of the palace of Lateran, which gave name to that part of the hill, and which had been the house of Plautius Lateranus, a rich Roman senator, whom Nero put to death as an accomplice in Piso's conspiracy. Constantine inherited it by his wife Fausta, whence it was called Faustina, and more frequently the Constantinian Basilic. The founder built a chapel within the inclosed area of this church and dependent upon it, dedicated in honour of St John Baptist, with a second altar dedicated in honour of St John Evangelist. This chapel was the Baptisterion, a fine structure, and most richly ornamented. Upon the font was placed an image of St John Baptist. We find by the ancient memorials of the church of Rome that Constantine gave to this baptisterion, or chapel, thirteen thousand nine hundred and thirty-four golden pence yearly income, in houses and lands not only in Italy, but also in Sicily, Africa, and Greece, which amounts to about ten thousand four hundred and fifty pounds; for the golden penny at that time was worth fifteen shillings of our money. But if we consider the difference of the price of things, the sum would be now of a much greater value. This chapel having always been a place of great fame and devotion, from it the whole church, though dedicated to our Saviour, has been generally called the Church of St John Lateran. The Lateran church is styled the head, the mother, and the mistress of all churches, as an inscription on its walls imports. It would be too long to enumerate the precious relics of our divine Redeemer's passion, and of innumerable martyrs with which it is enriched. Pope Leo I established among the canons of the Lateran basilic the regular observance which St Austin had instituted in Africa. Alexander II placed here reformed regular canons which he called from St Frigidian's at Lucca, in 1061, and declared this church the head of that reformed congregation, which still bears the name of the regular canons of St John of Lateran; though these canons have been removed hence to the Church of our Lady *della pace*, and secular canons with the title of prelates serve this basilic according to the constitutions of Sixtus III in 1456 and Sixtus IV in 1483.

Solomon's temple was dedicated to the divine worship by the most solemn religious rites and prayers. The Christians, who blessed their food, their houses, and whatever they used, could not fail to consecrate or bless oratories which they deputed for divine service: though during the persecutions they celebrated the sacred mysteries in houses, prisons, private places, &c.

Hence churches have been usually consecrated by solemn rites and prayers, and it is a grievous sacrilege to profane them, or do in them anything but what has an immediate relation to the divine service: the church being the house of God. Though he be everywhere, he is said to reside particularly in heaven, because he there displays his presence by his glory

and gifts. In like manner he honours the church with his special presence, being there in a particular manner ready to receive our public homages, listen to our petitions, and bestow on us his choicest graces. How wonderful were the privileges which he annexed, how magnificent the promises which he made, to the Jewish temple!<sup>1</sup> With what religious awe did his servants honour it! how severely were they punished who sacrilegiously profaned it or its sacred vessels! There was then but one temple of the true God in the whole world; and his temple no infidel was ever suffered to enter further than the outer inclosure or court of the Gentiles. The Jews, that is, the faithful, had an inner court allotted to them, where they beheld the offering of the sacrifices and performed their devotions at a distance from the holy place, but were never permitted to go any further, nor even to enter this court, till they had been purified from all legal uncleanness by the ablutions and other rites prescribed by the law, an emblem of the interior purity of the soul. The Levites, though devoted to the divine service, were not admitted beyond the part allotted for the bloody sacrifices. None but priests could enter the sanctuary or holy place, and of these but one a week, by lot, could approach the golden altar to offer the daily sacrifice of frankincense. As for the holy of holies, or innermost sanctuary, which God sanctified by his more immediate presence, and where the ark, the tables of the law, and Aaron's rod were kept; this no one could ever enter on any account except the high priest alone, and he only once a year, on the solemn feast of expiation, carrying the blood of victims sacrificed. Neither was he to do this without having been prepared by solemn purifications and expiations; and the smoke of perfumes was to cover the ark and the propitiary or oracle called the Seat of God before the blood was offered. Yet the temple of Solomon and the holy of holies were only types of our sacred tabernacles in which is offered, not the blood of sheep and goats, but the adorable blood of the immaculate Lamb of God. "Verily, the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not."<sup>2</sup> When the Jewish temple was consecrated, to inspire the people with an awe for the holy house, "God filled it with a cloud; nor could the priests stand and minister, by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."<sup>3</sup> This miracle was repeated when holocausts were first offered in it.<sup>4</sup> The like wonder had often happened when Moses and Aaron entered the tabernacle. When God came to give the law, Moses himself was affrighted and trembled,<sup>5</sup> and the people, being terrified, stood afar off.<sup>6</sup> Yet all these things were but shadows to our tremendous mysteries, in which we are sprinkled with the precious blood of our Redeemer; and it is offered by our hands,<sup>7</sup> and we are thereby associated to the "company of many thousands of angels," &c.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Chron. or Paralip. vii. 2, 14, 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xxviii. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. xi. 21.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Chron. or Par. v. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Exod. xx. 18.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Chron. vii. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. xi. 22.

A ray of the divine presence ought to pierce our souls when we approach the sanctuary, and we ought with trembling to say to ourselves, " How terrible is this place! this is no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven."<sup>1</sup> Do we not enter the awful gates as we should have done the miraculous cloud? Do we not seem to hear with Moses that voice from the bush, " Approach not hither: put off the shoes from thy feet, for the ground on which thou standest is holy? "<sup>2</sup> Do we not put away all earthly thoughts and affections? Do we not veil our faces by the awe with which we are penetrated, and the strict guard we place upon our senses when we appear before him in his holy place, before whose face the heavens and the earth withdraw themselves, and their place is not found.<sup>3</sup> The seraphims tremble in his presence and veil their faces with their wings.<sup>4</sup> Cassian mentions<sup>5</sup> that the Egyptian monks put off their sandals whenever they went to celebrate or receive the holy mysteries. As the Jews upon entering the temple bowed themselves toward the mercy-seat, so it seems to have been derived from them in the beginning of the church, as Mr Mede and Mr Bingham observe that the Greek and all the Oriental Christians took up the custom, which they still retain, of going into the middle of the church at their ingress and bowing toward the altar, repeating those words of the publican in the gospel, " God, be merciful to me a sinner ": which all know who have visited any of their churches at Rome, Ancona, or in the East. The custom of sprinkling the forehead with holy water in entering the church is of primitive antiquity; and the use of holy water is recommended by tradition and miracles.<sup>6</sup> In taking it as an emblem of interior purity, we pray in sincere compunction and holy fear that God in his mercy sprinkle us with hyssop dipped, not in the blood of goats and calves, which could not take away sin, but in the adorable blood of Christ, which may perfectly cleanse our souls, that we may present ourselves spotless in his holy house and divine presence.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 9:*

THE DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR, commonly called ST JOHN LATERAN: ST BENIGNUS or BENEN, Bishop, a disciple of St Patrick, eminent for his gentle disposition: ST MATHURIN, who, embracing the Christian faith, sold all his goods and renounced the world, becoming a priest: ST THEODORUS TYRO, martyr: and ST VANNE or VITONIUS, Bishop of Verdun, chosen for this office after he had borne the yoke of our Lord in a monastery for many years.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxviii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. iii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Apoc. xx. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Isa. vi. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Instit. lib. i. c. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Constit. Apost. lib. viii. c. 29; St Epiphan. hær. 30, in vitâ Josephi Com. sub Constantino; St Hieron. in vitâ St Hilarion; Theodoret, Hist. Eccl. lib. v. c. 2 et 12; Beda de St Germano Antis. Hist. lib. i. s. 17.

NOVEMBER 10

ST ANDREW AVELLINO, CONFESSOR  
(A.D. 1608)

[See his life, written five years after his death, by F. John Baptist Castaldo, Pr. of his Order, printed at Naples, 1613; also Historia Clericorum Regularium, authore Jos. de' Silos, 3 vols. fol., Romæ, 1608, et Historia della Religione de' Padri Chierici Regolari dal P. Gio. Battista del Tuffo, 2 vols. in fol., Roma, 1609; likewise the bull of his canonization by Clement XI published in the Bullar, t. x.]

ST ANDREW AVELLINO was a native of Castro Nuovo, a small town in the kingdom of Naples, and born in 1520. In his infancy he gave early tokens of the most happy dispositions to virtue. At school he had the fear of God always before his eyes, and dreaded the very shadow of the least sin. A beautiful complexion exposed his chastity to several snares and dangers, which he escaped by assiduous prayer, mortification, watchfulness over himself, and care in shunning all dangerous company. After mature deliberation he took the ecclesiastical tonsure, and was sent to Naples to study the civil and canon law. Being there promoted to the degree of doctor in laws, and to the dignity of the priesthood, he began to plead such causes in the ecclesiastical court as the canons allow clergymen to undertake. This employment, however, engrossed his thoughts, too much dissipated his mind, and insensibly weakened his affection for holy meditation and prayer. A fault into which he fell opened his eyes and made him see the precipice which lay before him. Once, in pleading a cause in a matter, indeed, which was of no weight, a lie escaped him for which, upon reading these words of holy scripture, "The mouth that lieth killeth the soul," he was struck with so great remorse and deep compunction that he resolved immediately to renounce his profession and to give himself up entirely to a penitential life and to the spiritual care of souls. This he did with so much ardour that his whole conduct was a model of perfect virtue.

The archbishop, judging no one more proper than Andrew to be the director of souls that were engaged by the obligations of their state in the career of evangelical perfection, committed to him the care of a certain nunnery in that city. The holy man's zeal for removing all obstacles to the recollection of those spouses of Christ, in which consists the very essence of their state and virtue, stirred up the malice and rage of certain wicked men in the city, whom he had forbid being ever admitted to the grate to speak to any of the nuns. He once narrowly escaped death, with which they threatened him, and another time received three wounds in his face. These injuries he bore with invincible meekness, being ready with joy to lay down his life for the spiritual interest of souls and for the defence of justice and virtue. Out of an earnest desire of more readily attaining to a perfect disengagement of his heart from all earthly things, in 1556 he embraced, at Naples, the rule of the Regular Clerks, called Theatins, in

whom flourished at that time, to the great edification of the whole city, the religious spirit and fervour which they had inherited of St Cajetan, who died there in the convent of St Paul in 1547. Our saint, out of the love he bore to the cross, on this occasion changed his name of Lancelot into that of Andrew. By the humiliations and persecutions which he had met with even amongst his dearest friends (which trials are always the most severe to flesh and blood), he learned what incomparable sweetness and spiritual advantages are found in suffering with patience and joy, and in studying in that state to conform ourselves to the holy spirit and sentiments of Christ crucified for us. Nor can it be conceived what improvement a soul makes by this means in experimental perfect meekness, in patience, humility, and the crucifixion of self-love, and all her passions, by which Christ (or his Spirit) begins to live in her, and to establish the reign of his pure love in all her affections. Of this St Andrew was an example. To bind himself the more strictly to the most fervent pursuit or perfect virtue in all his actions, he made two private vows which only an extraordinary impulse of fervour could suggest. The first was, perpetually to fight against his own will; the second, always to advance to the utmost of his power in Christian perfection. Wonderful were his abstinence and exterior mortifications, and the indifference with which he treated his body; but much more his love of abjection and hatred of himself, that is, of his flesh and his own will. He bore without the least disturbance of mind the barbarous murder of his nephew; and, not content to withdraw all his friends from prosecuting the assassin, became himself an earnest suppliant to the judges for his pardon. His exactitude in the observance of regular discipline in every point, and his care to promote the same in others, especially whilst he was superior in his Order, were equal to the ardour of his zeal for the divine honour in all things. By the eminent sanctity of many of both religious and secular persons who had the happiness to be his penitents, it appeared visible that saints possess the art of forming saints.

Cardinal Paul Aresi, Bishop of Tortona, the author of many works of piety and ecclesiastical learning, and the Mæcenas of his age, had a particular esteem for our saint, and often made use of his advice and assistance in his most important affairs. St Charles Borromeo did the same, and obtained of him some religious men formed by his hand and animated with his spirit for the foundation of a convent of his Order at Milan. He had, soon after he was made archbishop, pitched upon the Theatins, whom St Andrew had formed to a perfect ecclesiastical spirit, to set before the eyes of his clergy a model and living example from which they might learn the apostolic spirit of the most perfect disengagement from the world. Our saint founded new convents of his Order at Placentia and in some other places; and was honoured by God with the gifts of

prophecy and miracles. After having given the world an example of the most heroic virtues, being broken with labours and old age, he was seized with an apoplexy at the altar as he was beginning mass, at those words, *Introibi ad altare Dei*, which he repeated thrice, and was not able to proceed. He was prepared for his passage by the holy sacraments, and calmly resigned his soul into the hands of his Creator on the 10th of November 1608. His body is kept with honour in the church of his convent of St Paul at Naples; and he was canonized by Clement XI.

This saint was a fit instrument of the Holy Ghost in directing others in the paths of perfect virtue, because dead to himself and a man of prayer. He never spoke of himself, never thought of his own actions, except of his weaknesses, which he had always before his eyes in the most profound sense of his own nothingness, baseness, total insufficiency, and weakness. Those who talk often of themselves discover that they are deeply infected with the disease of the devil, which is pride, or with the poison of vanity, its eldest daughter. They have no other reward to expect but what they now receive—the empty breath of sinners. Even this incense is only affected hypocrisy. St Teresa advises all persons to shun such directors as pernicious to souls, both by the contagion of self-conceit and vainglory which they spread, and by banishing the Holy Ghost with his light and blessing; for nothing is more contrary to him than a spirit of vanity and pride. The most perfect disinterestedness, contempt of the world, self-denial, obedience and charity are no less essential ingredients of a Christian, and especially an ecclesiastical spirit, than meekness and humility.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 10:*

ST ANDREW AVELLINO, a native of Naples, born 1520; from his youth he gave indications of a happy disposition to virtue: St JUSTUS, first Bishop of Rochester, sent to England by Pope Gregory in answer to St Augustine's appeal for workers; Justus was afterwards consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury: St MILLES, Bishop, St AMBROSIMUS, priest, and St SINA, deacon, martyred in Persia; educated at the Persian Court, they suffered death together: St TRYPHO and St RESPICRUS, martyrs, natives of Bithnia, commemorated with St NYMPHA, virgin martyr, because her body reposes with theirs at Rome; she was of Palermo, in Sicily.

## NOVEMBER 11

### ST MARTIN, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF TOURS (A.D. 397)

[For the history of St Martin we are chiefly indebted to his illustrious disciple St Sulpicius Severus, who, in an elegant and classical style, wrote his life some time before his death.]

THE great St Martin, the glory of Gaul and the light of the Western church in the fourth age, was a native of Sabaria, a town of Upper Pannonia, the ruins of which appear upon the river Gunez, in Lower Hungary, two leagues from Sarwar, upon the Raab, near the confines of Austria and Stiria. St Gregory of Tours places his birth in the year 316 or before Easter in 317, the eleventh of Constantine the Great. His parents carried

him with them in his infancy to Pavia, in Italy, whither they removed, and the saint had his education in that city. His father was an officer in the army. Our saint from his infancy seemed animated with the spirit of God, and to have no relish for anything but for his service, though his parents were idolaters. At ten years of age he made his way to the church against the will of his parents, and desired to be enrolled amongst the catechumens. His request was granted, and he assisted as often as possible at the instructions that were given to such at the church; by which he conceived so ardent a love of God that at twelve years of age he was for retiring into the desert, and would have done it had not the tenderness of his age hindered him. His heart, however, was always set upon the church and monasteries. An imperial order being issued to oblige the sons of veteran officers and soldiers to bear arms, the saint's own father, who very much desired that his son should follow that profession, discovered him, and at fifteen years of age he was entered in the cavalry. He contented himself with one servant, and him he treated as if he were his equal; they ate together, and the master frequently performed for him the lowest offices. All the time he remained in the army he kept himself free from those vices which too frequently sully and degrade that profession and, by his virtue, goodness, and charity, gained the love and esteem of all his companions. He was humble and patient above what human nature seemed capable of, though he was not yet baptized. He comforted all those that suffered affliction and relieved the distressed, reserving to himself out of his pay only what was sufficient for his daily support.

Of his compassion and charity St Sulpicius has recorded the following illustrious example. One day, in the midst of a very hard winter and severe frost, when many perished with cold, as he was marching with other officers and soldiers, he met at the gate of the city of Amiens a poor man, almost naked, trembling and shaking for cold, and begging alms of those that passed by. Martin, seeing those that went before him take no notice of this miserable object, thought he was reserved for himself. By his charities to others he had nothing left but his arms and clothes upon his back; when, drawing his sword, he cut his cloak in two pieces, gave one to the beggar, and wrapped himself in the other half. Some of the bystanders laughed at the figure he made in that dress, whilst others were ashamed not to have relieved the poor man. In the following night St Martin saw in his sleep Jesus Christ dressed in that half of the garment which he had given away, and was bid to look at it well and asked whether he knew it. He then heard Jesus say, "Martin, yet a catechumen, has clothed me with this garment." This vision inspired the saint with fresh ardour, and determined him speedily to receive baptism, which he did in the eighteenth year of his age, but still continued almost two years in the army at the request of his tribune, with whom he lived in the most intimate friendship,

and who promised to renounce the world when the term of the service and commission in which he was then employed should be elapsed. During this interval Martin was so entirely taken up with the obligations of his baptism that he had little more than the name of a soldier, and expressed much impatience at being detained one moment from devoting himself solely to the divine service. Upon an irruption which the Germans made into Gaul, the troops were assembled to march against them and a donative was distributed amongst the soldiers. Martin thought it would be ungenerous and unjust to receive the donative when he had thoughts of quitting the service. He therefore begged that his donative might be bestowed on some other person, and asked his dismission that he might give himself up totally to the service of Christ. He was told that it was for fear of the battle that was expected next day that he desired his dismission. Martin, with surprising intrepidity, offered to be placed in the front without arms, saying, "In the name of the Lord Jesus, and protected not by a helmet and buckler, but by the sign of the cross, I will thrust myself into the thickest squadrons of the enemy without fear." That night the barbarians demanded and obtained peace; upon which Martin easily procured leave to retire, after having served in the army about five years according to the most probable account.

St Martin, having quitted the camp, went to St Hilary, who had been made Bishop of Poitiers in the year 353 or 354. That great prelate soon became acquainted with the saint's extraordinary merit and, in order to fix him in his diocese, would fain have ordained him deacon, but was not able to overcome his humility and was obliged to be content only to make him exorcist. Martin was very desirous to pay his parents a visit in Pannonia; for which he obtained the leave of St Hilary, who made him promise he would return to him again. In crossing the Alps he fell into the hands of a company of robbers, and one of them lifted up his sword over his head to kill him; but another held his arm. They admired his modesty and intrepidity and asked him who he was, and whether he was not struck with fear at the sight of a sword lifted up to kill him. He answered that he was a Christian, and that he had never been more calm and secure than under that danger, because he certainly knew that the divine goodness is always most ready to protect us in life or in death, and is never more present to us than in the greatest dangers; but said he was only grieved that they, by the lives which they led, deprived themselves of the mercy of Christ. The robbers listened to him, admired the courage and confidence in God which virtue inspires, and he who had attempted to kill the saint put him in his road, became a Christian, led a penitential religious life in a monastery, and himself afterwards related this circumstance. Martin continued his journey through Milan into Pannonia, and converted his mother and many others; but his father remained in his

infidelity. In Illyricum he with so much zeal opposed the Arians who prevailed there without control that he was publicly scourged by them and banished the country. In Italy he heard that the church of Gaul was sorely oppressed by these heretics and St Hilary banished; upon which melancholy news he chose a retreat near the walls of Milan, where he entered upon a monastic life. Auxentius, the Arian invader of the see of Milan, soon became acquainted with his zeal for the orthodox faith and the council of Nice, and drove him out of that diocese. The saint in this distress fell into the company of a very virtuous priest, with whom he agreed to retire to the little desert island of Gallinaria, upon the coast of Liguria, near Albenga. Here, whilst he lived in great abstinence on roots and wild herbs, he happened unawares to eat a considerable quantity of hellebore, enough to have caused his death if he had not been restored to his health when brought to the last extremity by having recourse to prayer. Understanding, in 360, that St Hilary was returning to his bishopric, he went to Rome to meet him on his road, and finding there that he was already gone by, speedily followed and overtook him and, being most affectionately received by him, accompanied him to Poitiers. It being Martin's earnest desire to pursue his vocation in holy solitude, St Hilary gave him a little spot of land called Locociagum, now Lugugé, two leagues from the city, where our saint built a monastery which was standing in the eighth century, and seems to have been the first that was erected in Gaul. Amongst others who were received by the saint in this house was a certain catechumen who, shortly after, whilst St Martin was absent for three days upon business relating to the divine service, fell ill of a fever and died suddenly, beyond all expectation and without baptism. The saint, returning home, found his monks in great affliction and the corpse laid out in order to be buried. Bursting into a flood of tears, he fixed his eyes on the corpse; and feeling in himself a divine impulse to work a miracle, he ordered the rest to go out of the chamber and, like another Eliseus, stretched himself upon the dead body and prayed for some time with great earnestness till, perceiving that it began to revive, he rose up and stood by it, whilst in less than two hours the deceased person began to move his limbs, and at last opened his eyes. Being restored to life, he related how after his departure his soul seemed to be presented before the divine tribunal and sentenced to a dark dungeon, but that two angels represented to the judge that St Martin poured forth his prayers in her behalf; and that the judge ordered them to restore her to the body and raise it to life. The person was immediately baptized and lived many years. Another time the saint restored to life, in the same manner, a slave of a neighbouring rich man who had hanged himself. These two miracles exceedingly spread his reputation, and in the year 371 he was chosen the third Bishop of Tours and consecrated on the 3rd of July. St Gatian, who came from Rome about the same time

with St Dionysius of Paris in 250, had first preached the faith there, founded that see, and governed it fifty years, as St Gregory of Tours affirms. His successor, after the see had been several years vacant, was St Litorius, upon whose death the people demanded St Martin for their bishop. A stratagem was made use of to call him to the door of his monastery to give his blessing to a sick person, and he was forcibly conveyed to Tours under a strong guard. Some of the neighbouring bishops, who were called to assist at the election, urged that the meanness of his dress and appearance, and his slovenly air, showed him to be unfit for such a dignity. But such objections were commendations of the servant of God, who was installed in the episcopal chair.

St Martin in this new dignity continued the same manner of life, retaining the same humility of mind, austerity of life, and meanness of dress. He lived at first in a little cell near the church, but, not being able to endure the interruption which he met with from the many visits he there received, he retired to a monastery which he built two miles from the city, which is the famous abbey of Marmoutier, the most ancient that now subsists in France and belongs to the congregation of St Maur. The place was then a desert, inclosed by a high steep rock on one side and by the river Loire on the other, and the entrance into it was only by one very narrow passage. The holy bishop had a cell built of wood; several of his monks had cells made in the same manner, but the greater part took up their dwellings in narrow holes, which they dug in the side of the rock; one is still shown in which St Martin is said to have lodged for some time. He had here in a short time about fourscore monks; amongst them no one had any distinct property; no one was allowed to buy or sell, as was the practice of the greater part of the monks with regard to their work and sustenance. No art or business was permitted amongst them except that of writing, to which only the younger were deputed; the more ancient attended to nothing else but to prayer and spiritual functions. Very rarely any went out of his cell except to the oratory, where they assembled at the hours of public prayer; and they ate all together in the evening, after the hour of the fast. Wine was never afforded to anyone unless sickness required it. Most of them had garments of camel's hair, that is, of coarse camlet, and it was esteemed a crime to wear any soft clothing. There were, nevertheless, many persons of quality amongst them who had been educated in a tender and delicate manner. Many bishops were chosen out of this monastery; for there was not a city which did not desire to have a pastor who had been bred under the discipline of St Martin. The bishop himself was frequently employed in visiting all the parts of his diocese. Not far from his monastery stood a chapel and an altar, erected by the concession of his predecessors over the tomb of a pretended martyr. The place was much reverenced by the

people; but St Martin, who was not over-credulous, would not go thither to pray, not hearing any assured account of the relics. He asked the eldest of the clergy what they knew of them, and not receiving satisfaction, he went one day to the place with some of his brethren and, standing over the tomb, besought God to show him who was buried there. Then, turning to the left, he saw near him a pale ghost, of a fierce aspect, whom he commanded to speak. The ghost told his name, and it appeared that he had been a robber who was executed for his crimes whom the people had honoured as a martyr. None but St Martin saw him; the rest only heard his voice. He thereupon caused the altar to be removed and freed the people from this superstition.<sup>1</sup>

The utter extirpation of idolatry out of the diocese of Tours, and all that part of Gaul, was the fruit of the edifying piety, miracles, and zealous labours and instructions of St Martin. Soon after he had entered upon his episcopal charge, he was obliged (probably on account of the heathenish temples or some such affairs) to repair to the court of Valentinian I, who generally resided in Gaul. This prince, knowing that St Martin was come to beg of him something in favour of the Christian religion which he had no mind to grant, gave orders that he should not be admitted into the palace. Also his wife Justina, who was a furious Arian, endeavoured to prepossess him against the holy bishop. St Martin, having attempted in vain twice or thrice to get access, had recourse to his ordinary weapons. He put on hair cloth, covered his head with ashes, abstained from eating and drinking, and prayed day and night. On the seventh day he was ordered by an angel to go boldly to the palace. Accordingly he went thither, found the doors open, and nobody stopping him he went to the emperor who, seeing him at a distance, asked in passion why they had let him in, and would not vouchsafe to rise; but the place where he sat was suddenly all in a flame, which soon forced him to get up, says Sulpicius Severus.<sup>2</sup> Then, finding that he had felt the divine power, he embraced the saint several times, and granted him all that he desired even before he had time to mention his requests. After this he gave him audience several times, often made him eat at his table and, at his departure, offered him great presents, which the saint modestly refused out of love to the poverty he professed. This must have happened before the year 375, in which this emperor died.

St Martin destroyed many temples of idols and felled several trees that were held as sacred by the pagans. Having demolished a very ancient temple, he would also have cut down a pine that stood near it. The chief priest and other pagans opposed; but at length agreed that they themselves would fell it, upon condition that he who trusted so strongly in the God whom he preached would stand under it where they should place him.

<sup>1</sup> Sulp. Sev. in vit. St Mart. c. 11, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> Sulp. Sev. Dial. 2, c. 5, p. 456.

The saint, who was directed in these extraordinary events by a divine inspiration, consented, and suffered himself to be tied to that side of the tree on which it leaned. When it seemed just ready to fall upon him, he made the sign of the cross and it fell on the contrary side. There was not one, in a prodigious multitude of pagans that were present, who did not upon the spot demand the imposition of hands in order to be received amongst the catechumens. His zeal exposed him on many occasions to the hazard of his life. Wherever he destroyed temples, he immediately built churches or monasteries; and continued frequently to perform great miracles. At Triers he cured a maid who was sick of a palsy, and just ready to expire, by putting some oil that was blessed into her mouth. He restored to health a slave who belonged to Tetradius, formerly proconsul, that was possessed with a devil. At Paris, as he entered the gate of the city, followed by a great crowd, he kissed a most loathsome leper and gave him his blessing, and he was forthwith healed. Small threads of the clothes or hair shirt of St Martin often cured the sick when applied to them. One time the saint, as he was going to Chartres, passed through a village the inhabitants of which were all idolaters, yet they all came out to see him pass by. The holy prelate, seeing this multitude of infidels, was moved with extreme compassion, and with earnest affection lifted up his eyes to heaven. Then he began to preach to them the word of God in the manner that he was accustomed, and sweetly to invite them to eternal salvation with such pathetic words, voice, and energy, that it appeared plainly that it was not he who spoke, but God in him. A woman brought to him at that very time her only son, a child who was dead, and besought him as the friend of God to restore him to life. The saint, judging that this miracle might occasion the conversion of many, made his prayer, and in the presence of all the people restored the child alive to the mother, who was amazed and out of herself for joy. The people who had seen this miracle cried out aloud to heaven, ran to the saint, and cast themselves at his feet, beseeching him to make them catechumens, and to prepare them for baptism. St Martin rejoiced at the conversion of so many souls to God much more than anyone could have done for the conquest of a kingdom or all temporal advantages. Paulinus, who flourished with so great reputation for sanctity at Nola, being seized with a violent pain in his eye, where a cataract was beginning to be formed, St Martin touched him with a pencil and he was immediately cured.<sup>1</sup> Many other miracles wrought by St Martin are related by St Sulpicius Severus, especially in casting out devils, whom he did not expel with threats and terrors as other exorcists were accustomed to do; but, clothed with rough hair cloth and covered with ashes, he prostrated himself upon the ground, and with the arms of holy prayer subdued them and forced them at length to yield.

<sup>1</sup> *Sulp. de vita St Martin, c. 9.*

One day when St Martin was praying in his cell, the devil came to him environed with light, clothed in royal robes, with a crown of gold and precious stones upon his head, and with a gracious and pleasant countenance told him twice that he was Christ. Humility is the touchstone which discovers the devil's artifices, in all which a spirit of pride reigns. By this the saint, after some pause, discerned the evident marks of the angel of darkness and said to him, "The Lord Jesus said not that he was to come clothed with purple, and crowned and adorned with a diadem. Nor will I ever believe him to be Christ who shall not come in the habit and figure in which Christ suffered, and who shall not bear the marks of the cross in his body." At these words the fiend vanished, and left the cell filled with an intolerable stench.

Whilst St Martin was employed in making spiritual conquests, and in peaceably propagating the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the western empire was shaken with horrible convulsions. Maximus was proclaimed emperor by the Roman legions in Britain in 383, and, passing into Gaul, was acknowledged by the mutinous soldiery there, made Triers the seat of his empire, and defeated Gratian near Paris, who was betrayed by his own forces and assassinated by Andragathius at Lyons, on the 25th of August in 383. St Martin happened to go to Triers to intercede with the tyrant in favour of certain persons who were condemned to death for adhering to their late master Gratian. Though St Martin was Maximus's subject, he discovered the utmost reluctance to communicate with Maximus; and when he was invited to dine at the emperor's table, he refused a long while, saying boldly that he could not eat at the same table with a man who had deprived one emperor of his dominions and another of his life. Maximus protested that he had not accepted of the empire voluntarily, but that it had been forced upon him by the soldiery; that his incredible success seemed to testify the will of God, and that not one of his enemies had perished, except those who lost their lives in the battle. St Martin at length was prevailed upon to accept the invitation, which gave the emperor the utmost satisfaction, who ordered a great entertainment to be made, and invited the most considerable persons of his court and, among others, his uncle and brother, both counts, and the prefect of the prætorium. The priest who accompanied St Martin was seated in a most honourable place between two counts and on the same couch; and St Martin on a low seat near the emperor. In the midst of the entertainment, an officer presented the cup as usual to Maximus, who ordered it to be given to St Martin, expecting to receive it from his hand; but, when the bishop had drank, he gave it to the priest, as the most worthy person in the company; which action was exceedingly applauded by the emperor and the whole court. The empress, who attended night and day to the bishop's discourses, sat always at his feet upon the ground, and would needs give him an entertain-

ment in her turn, to which she invited the emperor. St Martin consented with the utmost reluctance, for though he was above seventy years old, he never conversed with women except on necessary spiritual affairs. But he found it unavoidable, as he had several things to petition for; such as the delivery of prisoners, the recalling several that were in banishment, and restoring estates that had been confiscated. The empress herself waited upon him at table in the humble posture of a servant.

Neither St Ambrose nor St Martin would communicate with Ithacius or those bishops who held communion with him, because they sought to put heretics to death. We cannot wonder at the offence these saints took at their prosecuting Priscillian in such a manner, when we consider how much the church abhorred the shedding of the blood even of criminals, and never suffered any of her clergy to have any share in such causes. St Martin continually reproved Ithacius for his conduct, and pressed him to desist from his accusation. He also besought Maximus not to spill the blood of the guilty; saying it was sufficient that they had been declared heretics and excommunicated by the bishops, and that there was no precedent of an ecclesiastical cause being brought before a secular judge. Ithacius, far from hearkening to his advice, presumed to accuse him of this heresy, as he usually did those whose manner of life seemed to him too rigid.

The Ithacians prevailed upon the emperor to send tribunes into Spain with a sovereign power to search out heretics and deprive them of their lives and possessions. No one doubted but many innocent persons would fall undistinguished in this search: for the paleness of a man's countenance or his dress was enough to bring him into suspicion with those people. The day after they had obtained this order, they heard, when they least expected it, that St Martin was almost got to Triers; for he was obliged to go there very often about affairs of charity. The Ithacians were greatly alarmed at his coming, and when they found that he abstained from their communion, they told the emperor that if the obstinacy of Theognostus was supported by Martin's authority, their reputation would be entirely ruined. Maximus therefore represented mildly to the holy man that the heretics had been justly condemned for their crimes by the imperial judges, not by the bishops. But perceiving that St Martin was not moved, but urged that the bishops had carried on the prosecutions, Maximus fell into a passion, and going away, gave immediate orders that the persons for whom he came to intercede should be put to death. These were Count Narses and the governor Leucadius, who were abnoxious to Maximus for having adhered to Gratian's party. The holy man had still more at heart to prevent the tribunes being sent into Spain, and this not only for the sake of many Catholics, but also for the heretics, whose lives he was extremely desirous to save. His not communicating with the Ithacians

was only meant by him to prevent the mischiefs which might arise from the scandal of their unjust deportment; but, as they were not excommunicated, it was no violation of any canon to communicate with them. St Martin therefore in this extremity ran to the palace again, and promised the emperor to communicate with Ithacius provided he would pardon those unfortunate persons and recall the tribunes which had been sent into Spain. Maximus immediately complied with his demands. The next day being pitched upon by the Ithacians for the ordination of Felix, the newly-elected Bishop of Triers, St Martin communicated with them upon that occasion, that so many people might be rescued from slaughter. The day following, he left Triers with some remorse or grief for his condescension. But he was comforted by an angel at prayer in the wood near Andethanna, now Echternach, five miles from Triers, who said to him that he had reason to grieve for a condescension which was a misery, but charity rendered it necessary and excusable. St Sulpicius adds that St Martin used to tell them with tears in his eyes that, from this time, it cost him more difficulty and longer prayers to cast out devils than formerly. Some weakness, imperfection, or venial sin is often an occasion of a subtraction of sensible devotion or grace till it be recovered by greater humility and compunction: though such subtractions are frequently sent merely for trials.

St Martin continued his journey to Tours, where he was received as the tutelar angel of his people. In his great age he relaxed nothing of his austerities or of his zealous labours for the salvation of others; and he continued to the end of his life to confirm his doctrine by frequent and wonderful miracles, as we are assured by St Sulpicius Severus.

St Martin was above fourscore years old when God was pleased to put a happy end to his labours. Long before his departure he had knowledge of his approaching death, which he clearly foretold to his disciples. Being informed that a scandalous difference had arisen amongst the clergy at Cande, a parish at the extremity of his diocese at the confluence of the Loire and the Vienne, in Touraine, upon the borders of Poitou and Anjou, he went thither to compose the disturbance, attended as usual by a great number of his disciples. Having remained there some time and settled all things to his satisfaction, he was preparing for his return when he was seized with his last sickness, and found, on a sudden, his strength fail him. As soon as he was taken ill, he called his religious brethren about him and told them that the time of his departure was come. At this news they all with tears and with one voice said to him, "Father, why do you forsake us? or to whom do you recommend us? The ravening wolves will fall upon your flock. We know you desire to be with Jesus Christ, but your reward is secure; nor will be a whit diminished by being deferred awhile. Have pity on our necessity, who are left amidst great dangers."

The servant of God, moved with their tears, wept also, and prayed thus: "Lord, if I am still necessary to thy people, I refuse no labour. Thy holy will be done." As if he had said, says St Sulpicius, my soul is unconquered by old age, weakness, or fatigues, and ready to sustain new conflicts if you call me to them. But if you spare my age, and take me to yourself, be the guardian and protector of those souls for which I fear. By these words he showed that he knew not which was dearest to him, either to remain on earth for Christ or to leave the earth for Christ; and has taught us in prayer for temporal things to remit ourselves with perfect resignation and indifference to the divine will, begging that God may direct all things in us and through us to his greater glory. The saint had a fever which lasted some days; notwithstanding which he spent the night in prayer, lying on ashes and hair cloth. His disciples earnestly entreated him that he would suffer them at least to put a little straw under him; but he replied, "It becomes not a Christian to die otherwise than upon ashes. I shall have sinned if I leave you any other example." He continually held up his eyes and hands to heaven, never interrupting his prayer, so that the priest that stood about him begged that he would turn on one side to afford his body a little rest. He answered, "Allow me, my brethren, to look rather towards heaven than upon the earth, that my soul may be directed to take its flight to the Lord to whom it is going." Afterwards, seeing the devil near him, he said, "What dost thou here, cruel beast? Thou shalt find nothing in me. Abraham's bosom is open to receive me." Saying these words he expired on the 8th of November, probably in 397. He died seven months after St Ambrose, as St Gregory of Tours assures us. They who were present wondered at the brightness of his face and whole body, which seemed to them as if it were already glorified.<sup>1</sup> The inhabitants of Poitiers warmly disputed the possession of his body, but the people of Tours carried it off. The whole city came out to meet it; all the country people, and many from neighbouring cities, flocked thither, with about two thousand monks and a great company of virgins. They all melted into tears, though no one doubted of his glory. He was carried with hymns to the place of his interment, which was in a little grove at some distance from the monastery, where certain monks lived in separate cells. The place was then five hundred and thirty paces from the city, as St Gregory of Tours informs us, though at present it is part of it, and the walls were carried so far as to encompass it in the beginning of the inroads of the Normans. St Brice, St Martin's successor, built a chapel over his tomb, and St Perpetuus, the sixth Bishop of Tours, about the year 470, founded upon that spot the great church and monastery, the saint's sumptuous tomb being placed behind the high altar. The extraordinary devotion which the French and

<sup>1</sup> St Sulpic. Sever. Ep. 3, ad Bassulam Socrum suam, p. 369.

all Europe have expressed to St Martin, and to this church for the sake of his precious tomb, would furnish matter for a large history. The Huguenots rifled the shrine and scattered the relics of this saint. But this church recovered a bone of his arm and part of his skull.<sup>1</sup> Before this dispersion, certain churches had obtained small portions which they still preserve. The priory of St Martin's-in-the-Fields, at Paris, is possessed of a part; two of his teeth are shown in St Martin's, at Tournay. The cathedral at Tours was built by St Martin in honour of St Maurice; but since the year 1096 bears the title of St Gatian's. Its chapter is one of the most illustrious in France; the Bishop of Tours was suffragan to Rouen till he was made a metropolitan. A vial of sacred oil is kept at St Martin's, with which Henry IV was anointed king, instead of that from Rheims. St Sulpicius relates that St Martin sometimes cured distempers by oil which he had blessed, and that this oil was sometimes miraculously increased.<sup>2</sup>

Many miracles wrought at the shrine of St Martin, or through his intercession, immediately after his happy death, some of which are recounted by St Gregory of Tours, Fortunatus, and others, excited exceedingly the devotion of the people. Some have imagined that he was the first saint publicly honoured by the church as a confessor; but this is not so much as insinuated by any ancient author; and St John the Evangelist, St Thecla, and many others were not properly martyrs, not to mention St Petronilla, St Praxedes, and St Pudentiana. The principal feast of St Martin is kept on the 11th of November; that of his ordination and the translation of his relics on the 4th of July; that of bringing them back from Auxerre to Tours, called Relatio, on the 13th of December.

The virtue of St Martin, which was the miracle of the world, was founded in the most profound humility, perfect meekness, and self-denial by which he was dead to himself, in his continual meditation on religious truths, in his love of heavenly things and contempt of the world, to which his heart was crucified: lastly, in the constant union of his soul to God, by the exercise of holy prayer and by the entire resignation of himself to the divine will in all things without reserve.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 11:*

ST MARTIN, Bishop: ST MENNAS, an Egyptian, a soldier in the Roman army, martyred after boldly confessing himself a Christian: and another ST MENNAS, a martyr of Lybia, under Maximilian.

<sup>1</sup> See Gervaise, lib. iv. p. 344, 352.

<sup>2</sup> St Sulp. Dial. 3, c. 2, 3

NOVEMBER 12

ST MARTIN, POPE, MARTYR  
(A.D. 655)

[From his letters, Theophanes, and especially Anastasius, in *Pontific. et in Ep. ad Martin. Narciens. episc. ; the Vener. Card. Baronius, Fleury, lib. xxxviii. et Jos. Assemani, Comm. in Kalend. t. vi. p. 253.*]

ST MARTIN was a native of Todi, in Tuscany, and became renowned in the clergy of Rome for his learning and sanctity. Whilst he was deacon of that church he was sent by the Pope Theodorus, in quality of apocrisiarius or nuncio, to Constantinople, where he showed his zeal against the reigning heresy of the Monothelites. Upon the death of Theodorus, after a vacancy of near three weeks, Martin was elected pope, in July 649, and, in the October following, held in the Lateran church a council of one hundred and five bishops against the Monothelites, in which he condemned the ringleaders of that sect, particularly Sergius and Pyrrhus, who had been formerly bishops of Constantinople, and Paul, who was then in possession of that see. The Ecthesis of Heraclius and the typus of Constans, two imperial edicts, were likewise censured.

The Emperor Constans sent Olympius, his chamberlain, in quality of exarch into Italy, with an order either to cause Martin to be massacred or to send him prisoner into the East. Olympius, coming to Rome whilst the council was assembled, endeavoured to raise a schism; but not succeeding by open violence, had recourse to treachery, and commanded one of his attendants to murder the pope whilst he was administering the communion in the Church of St Mary Major, which might be more easily done as the pope carried the communion to everyone in his own place. The servant who had undertaken to execute this commission afterwards swore that he had been struck with blindness and could not see the pope. Olympius, therefore, seeing the pope had been thus protected by heaven, declared to him the orders which he had received, made his peace with him, and marched into Sicily, then in the hands of the Saracens, where his army perished and he died of sickness. The emperor then sent Theodorus Calliopas exarch, with Theodorus Pellurus, one of his chamberlains, with a strict charge to seize Martin, whom he accused of heresy, because he condemned the type; and charged him with Nestorianism, as the Egyptians did all Catholics. The new exarch and the chamberlain arrived at Rome with the army from Ravenna on Saturday, the 15th of June 653. The pope, who had been sick ever since October, shut himself up in the Lateran church, but sent some of his clergy to salute the exarch, who inquired where the pope was,<sup>1</sup> saying he desired to adore him, which he repeated the next day. Two days after, on Monday, Calliopas accused him of having

<sup>1</sup> St Mart. Ep. 15, and Anastas. in St Martin.

arms concealed; but the pope bade him search his palace, which he did; and no arms being found, the pope said, "Thus have calumnies been always employed against us." Half an hour after, the soldiers returned and seized the pope, who lay sick on a couch near the gate of the church; and Calliopas presented the clergy a rescript of the emperor, commanding St Martin to be deposed as unworthy of the popedom. The clergy cried out, "Anathema to him who shall say that Pope Martin hath changed any point of faith, and to him who perseveres not in the Catholic faith till death." Calliopas, fearing the multitude, said, "There is no other faith but yours; nor have I any other." Several of the bishops said, "We will live and die with him." The pope was led out of the church into the palace and, on the 18th of June, taken thence at midnight and carried in a boat down the Tiber to Porto, where he was put on board of a vessel to be conveyed to Constantinople. After three months' sail he arrived at the isle of Naxos, where he stayed with his guards a whole year, being allowed to lodge in a house. For a long time he was afflicted with a dysentery and a loathing of food. When the bishops and inhabitants sent him any provisions, the guards plundered them, and abused with injurious language and blows those who brought him presents, saying, "Whoever shows any kindness to this man is an enemy to the state." St Martin was more afflicted at the injuries which his benefactors received than at his own sufferings. He was brought to Constantinople on the 17th of September in 654, and after much ill usage lay in a dungeon without speaking to anybody but his keepers for near three months, from the 17th of September to the 15th of December. In one of his letters he wrote as follows: "It is now forty-seven days since I have been permitted to wash myself either in cold or warm water. I am quite wasted and chilled, and have had no respite either upon sea or land from the flux which I suffer. My body is broken and spent and, when I would take any nourishment, I want such kind of food as is necessary to support me; and have a perfect aversion and loathing to what I have. But I hope that God, who knows all things, when he shall have taken me out of this world, will bring my persecutors to repentance."<sup>1</sup> On the 15th of December he was examined by the Sacellarius, or treasurer, in the chamber of that magistrate, in presence of the senate which was then assembled there. He was removed thence to a terrace, where the emperor might have a sight of him from his window, and the Sacellarius ordered his guards to divest him of the marks of his episcopal dignity. Then delivering him into the hands of the prefect of the city he said, "Take him, my lord prefect, and pull him to pieces immediately." He likewise commanded those that were present to anathematize him. But not above twenty persons cried out anathema; all the rest hung down their heads and retired overwhelmed with grief.

<sup>1</sup> St Mart. Ep. 15.

The executioners, laying hold of the saint, took away his sacerdotal pallium and stripped him of all his clothes, except a tunic which they left him without a girdle, having torn it from the top to the bottom, so that his naked body was exposed to sight. They put an iron collar about his neck and dragged him in this manner from the palace through the midst of the city, the gaoler being fastened to him, and an executioner carrying the sword before him to show that he was condemned to die. The people wept and sighed, except a small number who insulted him; but the martyr preserved a calm and serene countenance. Being come to the prætorium, he was thrown into the prison with murderers; but about an hour afterwards was taken thence and cast into the prison of Diomedes, so much hurt and bruised that he left the staircase besmeared with his blood, and seemed ready to give up the ghost. He was placed on a bench, chained as he was, and almost dead with cold; for the winter was very severe. He had none of his own friends or servants about him but a young clerk who had followed him weeping. The gaoler was chained to him, and the order for his execution was expected every moment, and the holy pope impatiently waited for martyrdom. But it was delayed and his irons were knocked off.

St Martin continued in the prison of Diomedes near three months, to the 10th of March 655, when he was ordered to be banished to the Taurica Chersonesus on the 15th of May. The famine was so great in that country that the pope assured his friends in one of his letters, "Bread is talked of here, but never seen. If some relief is not sent us from Italy, or Pontus, it is impossible to live."<sup>1</sup> He wrote another letter in September, wherein he says,<sup>2</sup> "We are not only separated from the rest of the world, but are even deprived of the means to live. The inhabitants of the country are all pagans; and they who come hither, besides their learning the manners of the people of the country, have no charity, nor even that natural compassion which is to be found among barbarians. Neither do they bring anything from other places in the barks which come hither to be loaded with salt; nor have I been able to buy anything but one bushel of corn, which cost me four gold pence. I admire the insensibility of all those who have heretofore had some relation to me, who have so entirely forgot me that they do not so much as seem to know whether I am in the world. I wonder still more at those who belong to the church of St Peter for the little concern they show for one of their body. If that church has no money, it wants not corn, oil, or other provisions, out of which they might send us some small supply. What fear hath seized all these men which can hinder them from fulfilling the commands of God in relieving the distressed? Have I appeared such an enemy to the whole church, or to them in particular? However, I pray God, by the intercession

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 7.

of St Peter, to preserve them steadfast and immovable in the orthodox faith. As to this wretched body, God will have care of it. ‘He is at hand’; why should I give myself any trouble? I hope in his mercy, he will not prolong my course.” The good pope was not disappointed of his hope; for he died on the 16th of September, in 655, having held the holy see six years, one month, and twenty-six days. He was interred in a church of the Blessed Virgin, within a furlong from the city of Chersona; a great concourse of people resorted to his tomb. His relics were afterwards carried to Rome and deposited in a church dedicated long before in honour of St Martin of Tours. He is honoured by the Latins on the 12th of November, the day of the translation of his relics to Rome, and by the Greeks on the 13th of April; also on the 15th and 20th of September. By the Muscovites on the 14th of April. His constancy and firmness appear in his letters. They are well written, with strength and wisdom; the style is great and noble, worthy of the majesty of the holy see.

The saints equally despised the goods and the evils of this life, because they had before their eyes the eternal glory with which momentary labours and sufferings will be abundantly recompensed. Can we be called Christians who by our murmuring and impatience under the least trials, and by recoiling at the least harsh word, show ourselves to be strangers to the spirit, and enemies to the cross of Christ? It is only by bearing the marks of his sufferings, and by practising the heroic virtues which tribulation calls forth, that we can enter into the bliss which he has purchased for us by his cross. If with the saints we look up at the joys which are to be the recompense of our patience, and consider attentively the example of Christ, we shall receive our sufferings not only with resignation but with joy, as graces of which we are most unworthy.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 12:*

ST LEBWIN, Archbishop, called in his own language LIAFWIN, an English Saxon, patron of Daventer: ST LIVIN, a learned Irish Bishop, who preached the Gospel in Flanders and was martyred: ST MARTIN, Pope and martyr, 655: ST NILUS, anchorite, Father of the Church, who appears to have had St Chrysostom for his master; when he retired from the world he was married and had two sons, one of whom accompanied him; his eloquence was as remarkable as his virtue.

### NOVEMBER 13

#### ST STANISLAS KOSTKA, CONFESSOR, PATRON SAINT OF POLAND

YOUTH is the amiable bloom of age in which sanctity has particular advantages and charms; a circumstance which recommends to our admiration this saint, who in his tender years surpassed the most advanced in the gifts of grace and virtue. Stanislas was the youngest son of John Kistka, senator of Poland, and of Margaret Kriska, sister to the palatine

of Masovia, and was born in the castle of Rostkou on the 28th of October in 1550. His mother engraved in his tender heart early and deep impressions of piety; and the first use the saint made of his reason was to consecrate himself to God with a fervour beyond his age. The first elements of letters he learned at home under a private tutor named John Bilinski, who attended him and his elder brother Paul to the numerous college of the Jesuits at Vienna when the saint was fourteen years old. From the first dawn of reason he showed no inclination to anything but to piety; and, as soon as he was capable, he gave as much of his time as possible to prayer and study. His nicety in the point of purity, and his dread of detraction and all dangers of sin, made him infinitely cautious in the choice of his company. When he arrived at Vienna, and was lodged among the pensioners of the Jesuits, everyone was struck with admiration to see the profound recollection and devotion with which he poured forth his soul before God in prayer; the modesty and glowing fervour which appeared in his countenance at those times raised in all who beheld him a veneration for his person. He sometimes fell into raptures, and often even at public prayer torrents of sweet tears gushed from his eyes with such impetuosity that he was not able to contain them. He always came from his devotions so full of the spirit of God that he communicated the same to those who conversed with him. The fire of divine love which burnt in his breast he kindled in the hearts of several devout companions, with whom it was his delight to discourse on God and heavenly things: on which subjects he spoke with such energy as imparted to others some sparks of that joy with which his heart and words overflowed.

His innocence and virtue stood yet in need of being perfected by trials. Upon the death of the Emperor Ferdinand in 1564, his successor, Maximilian II, who had not the same zeal for religion, took from the Jesuits the house which Ferdinand had lent them for the lodging of their pensioners. Paul Kostka, who was two years older than the saint, and who had their tutor Bilinski always in his interest, was fond of liberty and diversions, and to indulge this inclination prevailed with Bilinski to take lodgings in a Lutheran's house; and, looking upon his brother's conduct as a censure of his own, treated him continually with injuries and often struck and beat him. Bilinski was still a more dangerous tempter and persecutor, not only by declaring always for the elder brother against him, but also by endeavouring to persuade him by flattering insinuations and severe rebukes that he ought to allow more to the world, and that so much was not necessary for a person in his station to save his soul. Stanislas, far from being overcome, stood the more firmly upon his guard and opposed these assaults by redoubling his fervour. He communicated every Sunday and great holiday, and always fasted the day before his communion; never went to school morning or afternoon without first going to church t-

salute the blessed sacrament; heard every day two masses, and made his meditation, slept little, and always rose at midnight to pray; he often wore a hair shirt; frequently took the discipline; never made his appearance in company only at table; and instantly rose up and left it if any unbecoming word was let fall by anyone in his presence. When he was not at church or college he was always to be found at his devotions, or studies in his closet, except for a short time after meals.

The saint suffered these dangerous solicitations and persecutions for two years, and then fell very ill. Finding his distemper dangerous, he desired to receive the viaticum; but his Lutheran landlord would not suffer it to be brought publicly to his house, and the tutor and brother would have it deferred. The pious youth, in extreme affliction, recommended himself to the intercession of St Barbara, who is particularly invoked in the northern kingdoms, for the grace of a happy death and the benefit of receiving the last sacraments. His prayer was heard; and he seemed in a vision to be communicated by two angels. The Blessed Virgin, in another vision, told him that the hour of his death was not yet come, and bade him devote himself to God in the Society of Jesus. He had then for about a year entertained thoughts of embracing that state; and after his recovery petitioned the superiors to be admitted. F. Magius, provincial of that part of Germany, who happened then to be at Vienna, durst not receive him for fear of incurring the indignation of his father, who warmly declared he never would consent that his son should become a religious man. Cardinal Commendon, legate of Pope Pius V at Vienna, whom the saint desired to recommend him to the provincial, durst not undertake to do it. Stanislas therefore, having discovered his resolution to his confessor, and by a tender and edifying letter laid in his room left notice of his design to his tutor and brother, stole away privately to Ausburg, and thence went to Dilingen to make the same request to the pious F. Canisius, provincial of Upper Germany. F. Canisius, to try his vocation, ordered him to wait on the pensioners of the college at table and cleanse out their rooms, which the saint did with such extraordinary affection and humility that the students were exceedingly astonished at his meekness, charity, devotion, and spirit of mortification, though he was utterly unknown to them. F. Canisius, after having kept him three weeks, sent him to Rome, where the saint threw himself at the feet of St Francis Borgia, then general of the Society, and earnestly renewed his petition. St Francis received him with great joy. Stanislas had no desire to see the curiosities of Rome, but without further delay entered upon a retreat under the master of novices, during the whole course of which he was favoured with the sweetest consolations of the Holy Ghost and extraordinary heavenly communications. He took the habit on SS. Simon and Jude's day in 1567, and a few days after received from his father a most passionate letter with threats that he

would procure the banishment of the Jesuits out of Poland, and would make them feel the weight of his indignation, for having concurred to such a dishonour of his family. Stanislas answered it in the most modest and dutiful manner, but expressed a firm purpose of serving God according to his vocation; and, without the least disturbance or trouble of mind, applied himself to his religious duties, calmly recommending all things to God.

His own faults he always exaggerated with unfeigned simplicity, so as to set them in a light in which only humility, which makes a person most severe in condemning himself, could have represented them: whence others said of him that he was his own grievous calumniator. As pride feels a pleasure in public actions, so his greatest delight was secrecy, or some humbling circumstance, whenever he made his appearance in public, as a more than ordinary threadbare habit by which he might seem to strangers to be a person of no consideration in the house, as he looked upon himself and desired to be regarded by others. Nothing gave him so much confusion and displeasure as to hear himself commended; and he was ingenious in preventing all occasions of it, and in shunning everything by which he might appear to others humble. The whole life of this fervent novice seemed almost a continual prayer; nor was his prayer almost any other than an uninterrupted exercise of the most tender love of God, which often vented itself in torrents of sweet tears, or in holy transports or raptures. By the habitual union of his heart with God he seemed, in the opinion of his directors, never to be molested with distractions at his prayers. Several, by having recommended themselves with confidence to his good thoughts, have suddenly found themselves comforted and freed from bitter anguish of soul and interior trouble of mind. The ardent love which the saint had for Jesus Christ in the holy sacrament was so sensible that his face appeared all on fire as soon as he entered the church. He was often seen in a kind of ecstasy at mass, and always after receiving the holy communion. The whole day on which he communicated, he could not, without great difficulty and reluctance, speak of anything but the excess of the love which Jesus Christ has expressed for us in that adorable sacrament; and of this he discoursed with such interior feeling and joy, and in so pathetic a manner, that the most experienced and spiritual fathers took great delight in conversing with him.

This holy seraph, glowing with divine love, was inflamed with an uncommon ardour to be speedily united to the object of his love a considerable time before his happy death, which he distinctly foretold to several. In the beginning of August he said to several together that all men are bound to watch, because they may die any day; but that this lesson particularly regarded him, because he should certainly die before the end of that month. Four days after, discoursing with F. Emmanuel Sa concerning the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, he said, in a kind of transport

of devotion, "O father, how happy a day to all the saints was that on which the Blessed Virgin was received into heaven! I doubt not but they all celebrate the anniversary of it with extraordinary joy, as we do on earth. I hope myself to see the next feast they will keep of it." His youth, and the perfect health which he then enjoyed, made others give no credit to this prediction. Yet they perceived that he made all immediate preparations for the great journey of eternity. On St Laurence's day, in the evening, he found himself indisposed; upon which he could not contain his joy that the end of his mortal pilgrimage drew near. Being carried to the infirmary, he made the sign of the cross upon his bed, saying he should never more rise out of it. His fever proved at first only intermitting; yet he repeated the same assurances. On the 14th day of the month he said, in the morning, that he should die the night following. A little after mid-day he fell into a swoon, which was followed with a cold sweat, and he demanded and received the viaticum and extreme unction with the most tender devotion; during which, according to his desire, he was laid upon a blanket on the floor. He begged pardon of all his brethren for whatever offences he had committed against anyone, and continued repeating frequent aspirations of compunction and divine love. Some time after, he said that he saw the Blessed Virgin, accompanied with many angels, and happily expired a little after three o'clock in the morning of the 15th of August, in 1568, having completed only nine months and eighteen days of his noviciate, and of his age seventeen years, nine months, and eighteen days. The sanctity of his life and several manifest miracles engaged Clement VIII to beatify him, that is, declare him happy, in 1604. Paul V allowed an office to be said in his honour in all the churches of Poland; Clement X granted that privilege to the Society, and settled his feast on the 13th of November, on which his body, which was found sound and without the least signs of decay or corruption, was translated from the old chapel and laid in the new Church of the Noviciate at Rome, founded by Prince Pamphili. The saint was canonized by Benedict XIII in 1727. The Poles have chosen him, jointly with St Casimir, chief patron of their kingdom; and he is particular patron of the cities of Warsaw, Posna, Lublin, and Leopold. Many miraculous cures have been wrought through his intervention. A relation of this that follows, with the attestations of five eminent physicians and a surgeon, and of all the Jesuits then living at Lima, and witnesses to the fact, approved by the vicariat (the archbishopric being then vacant), was printed at Madrid in 1674. A novice in the convent of the Jesuits at Lima, after a malignant fever in the month of October, was deprived by a palsy of all motion on the whole right side of his body, so that he was not able to stir in the least that hand or foot. A loathing of all food, with a fever, and other bad symptoms attended the disorder, which the physicians judged incurable. On the feast of St Stanislas, the

13th of November, by applying a picture of the saint to that side, he found the motion and feeling in those parts instantly restored and himself in perfect health. Certain companions who were present called the rector, and the whole house followed him. The novice, who was recovered, arose and dressed himself, and walked to the church as well as if he had never been sick. The whole community accompanied him and sung a solemn *Ite Deum.*

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 13:*

ST BRICE, Bishop, remarkable before his conversion for sloth and pride: ST CHILLEN or KILLIAN of Ireland, priest, a near kinsman of St Fiaker: ST CONSTANT, priest and anchorite in Logherne: ST DIDACUS or DIEGO (in Spanish, James), a native of Seville, who became a hermit when very young and afterwards took the habit as a lay brother in a convent of the Observantine Friars Minors: ST HOMOBONUS, a merchant (1197), who, pursuing his business with diligence as an employment given to him by God, overcame perverseness with gentleness and remained always master of his own soul: ST MIRRIUS, martyr, who bore dreadful torments with a miraculous constancy: ST STANISLAUS KOSTKA, son of a Polish senator; he was remarkable for the innocence and holiness of his life, which he devoted to God in the Society of Jesus.

#### NOVEMBER 14

### ST LAURENCE, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN (A.D. 1180)

[From his life authentically written by a regular Canon of Eu, not many years after his death, in Surius; Chron. Rotomag. F. Fontenai, Contin. de l'Hist. de l'Eglise de France, lib. xxxi. p. 46, &c.]

LAURENCE was youngest son to Maurice O'Tool, a rich and powerful prince in Leinster, whose ancestors for many ages had been princes of the territories of Hy-Murray and Hy-Mal, in the vicinity of Dublin. Laurence was but ten years old when his father delivered him up a hostage to Dermod Mac Murchad, King of Leinster. The barbarous king kept the child in a desert place, where he was treated with great inhumanity; till his father, being informed that by such usage his son was fallen into a bad state of health, obliged the tyrant to put him in the hands of the pious Bishop of Glendaloch, by whom he was carefully instructed in the service of God, and at twelve years of age sent back to his father. Maurice took Laurence with him and went to thank the good bishop. At the same time he mentioned to that prelate his design of casting lots which of his four sons he should destine to the service of the church. Laurence, who was present, was justly startled at such a mad superstitious project, but, glad to find so favourable an overture to his desires, cried out with great earnestness, "There is no need of casting lots. It is my most hearty desire to have for my inheritance no other portion than God in the service of the church." Hereupon the father, taking him by the hand, offered him to God by delivering him to the bishop, in whose hands he left him, having first recommended him to the patronage of St Coëmgen, founder of the great monastery there, and patron of that diocese, which has been since united to the see of Dublin. The good prelate performed excellently the part of

an Ananias to his pupil, who, by his fidelity in corresponding with the divine grace, deserved to find the Holy Ghost an interior master in all virtues, especially humility and the spirit of prayer.

Upon the death of the Bishop of Glendaloch, who was at the same time abbot of the monastery, Laurence, though but twenty-five years old, was chosen abbot, and only shunned the episcopal dignity by alleging that the canons require in a bishop thirty years of age. The saint governed his numerous community with admirable virtue and prudence, and in a great famine which raged during the first four months of his administration, like another Joseph, was the saviour of his country by his boundless charities. Trials, however, were not wanting for the exercise of his virtue. For certain false brethren whose eyes could not bear the fulgurancy of his virtue, the regularity of his conduct, and the zeal with which he condemned their disorders, attacked his reputation by slanders, to which he opposed no other arms than silence and patience.

Gregory, the Archbishop of Dublin, happening to die about the time that our saint was thirty years of age, he was unanimously chosen to fill that metropolitical see, and was consecrated in 1162 by Gelasius, Archbishop of Armagh and successor of St Malachy. His first care was to reform the manners of his clergy and to furnish his church with worthy ministers. His exhortations to others were most powerful, because enforced with sweetness and vigour, animated with an apostolic spirit, and strongly impressed by the admirable example of his own life, which everyone who had any sparks of piety in his breast was ashamed to see himself fall so infinitely short of. About the year 1163 he engaged the secular canons of his cathedral of the Holy Trinity to receive the rule of the regular canons of Arouasia, an abbey which was founded in the diocese of Arras about fourscore years before, with such reputation for sanctity and discipline that it became the head or mother house of a numerous congregation. Our saint took himself the religious habit, which he always wore under his pontifical attire. He usually ate with the religious in the refectory, observed their hours of silence, and always assisted with them at the midnight office; after which he continued a long time in the church in private prayer before a crucifix, and toward break of day went to the burial place to pour forth certain prayers for the souls of the faithful departed. He never ate flesh, and fasted all Fridays on bread and water, and oftentimes without taking any sustenance at all. He wore a rough hair shirt and used frequent disciplines. Every day he entertained at table thirty poor persons, and often many more, besides great numbers which he maintained in private houses. All found him a father both in their temporal and spiritual necessities; and he was most indefatigable in the sacred functions of his charge, especially in announcing assiduously to his flock the word of life. To watch over and examine more narrowly into his own heart and conduct,

and to repair his interior spirit, he used often to retire for some days into some close solitude. St Laurence frequently made choice of Glendaloch for his retreats; but he usually hid himself in a solitary cave at some distance from the monastery, between a rock and a deep lake, in which St Coëmgen had lived. When our saint came out of these retreats he seemed like another Moses coming from conversing with God, full of a heavenly fire and divine light.

St Laurence found the greatest part of his flock so blinded with the love of the world and enslaved to their passions that the zealous pains he took seemed lost upon them. He threatened them with the divine judgments in case they did not speedily and effectually reform their manners by sincere repentance: but, like Noë when he preached to a world drowned in sin, he seemed to them to speak in jest, till they were overtaken on a sudden by those calamities which he had foretold, which served to purify the elect and doubtless brought many who before had been deaf to the saint's remonstrances to a sense of their spiritual miseries. St Laurence was obliged, for the affairs of his church, to go over to England in order to make application to King Henry II, who happened then to be at Canterbury. St Laurence repaired thither and was received by the monks at Christ Church with the honour due to his sanctity, and desired by them to sing high mass the next day. That whole night he spent in prayer before the shrine of St Thomas, to whose intercession he recommended himself and the business which brought him thither. On the day following, as he was going up to the altar to officiate, a madman who had heard much of his sanctity, out of an extravagant notion of making so holy a man a martyr and another St Thomas, gave him so violent a blow on the head with a staff as knocked him down. All that were present concluded that he was mortally wounded, and expressed their concern by their tears. But the saint, coming to himself again, called for water, which he blessed with the sign of the cross, and then directed the wound to be washed with it. This was no sooner done but the blood was immediately stanched, and the saint said mass. To this miracle the author of his life, who was then at Canterbury, was an eye-witness, and assures us that the fracture was to be seen in the saint's skull after his death. The king ordered the frantic assassin to be hanged; but the holy prelate interceded in his favour and obtained his pardon.

The third general council of Lateran was held at Rome, in 1179, by Pope Alexander III, with three hundred bishops, for the reformation of manners and the extirpation of heretical errors. St Laurence went on from England to Rome, and with the Archbishop of Tuam, five other Irish, and four English bishops, assisted at this council. Our saint laid before his holiness the state of the Irish church, and begged that effectual remedies might be applied to many disorders which reigned in that country and

care taken for preserving the liberties of that national church. The pope was wonderfully pleased with his wise and zealous proposals, and so satisfied of his virtue and prudence, that he readily made the regulations which the saint desired, and appointed him legate of the holy see in the kingdom of Ireland. As soon as the saint was returned home, he began vigorously to execute his legatine power by reforming the manners of the clergy and making wholesome regulations. He found the whole country afflicted with a terrible famine, which continued to rage for three years. The saint laid himself under an obligation of feeding every day fifty strangers and three hundred poor persons of his own diocese, besides many others whom he furnished with clothes, victuals, and the other necessaries of life. Several mothers who were reduced so low as not to be able to keep their own children, laid them at the bishop's door or in other places where he would see them, and the saint took care of them all: sometimes he provided for three hundred of them together.

Henry II, King of England, was offended at Roderic, the Irish monarch, and our saint undertook another journey into England to negotiate a reconciliation between them. Henry would not hear of a peace, and immediately after the saint's arrival set out for Normandy. Laurence retired to the monastery of Abingdon, and after staying there three weeks, followed him into France. Henry, who had always repulsed him, was at length so much moved by his piety, prudence, and charity, that he granted him everything he asked, and left the whole negotiation to his discretion. It was only to obtain this, that charity had made the saint desire to remain longer upon earth. Having discharged his commission he was obliged, by a fever which seized him upon the road, to stop his journey. He took up his quarters in the monastery of regular canons at Eu, upon the confines of Normandy, an abbey depending upon that of St Victor's in Paris. Going into this house he recited that verse of the psalmist, "This is my resting place for ever: in this place will I dwell, because I have chosen it." He made his confession to the abbot, and received the viaticum and extreme unction from his hands. To one who put him in mind to make a will, he answered with a smile, "Of what do you speak? I thank God I have not a penny left in the world to dispose of." Indeed, whatever he possessed always became immediately the treasure of the poor. The saint died happily on the 14th of November, in 1180, and was buried in the church of the abbey. Theobald, Archbishop of Rouen, and three other commissioners, by order of Pope Honorius III, took juridical informations of several miracles wrought at the tomb, through the intercession of the servant of God, and sent an authentic relation to Rome; and Honorius published the bull of his canonization in 1226, in which he mentions that seven dead persons had been raised by him to life. This archbishop, in 1227, caused his body to be taken up and enshrined, forty-two years

after his death. The abbey of our Lady at Eu still possesses the greatest part of his relics, though some churches at Paris and elsewhere have been enriched with certain portions.

The saintly deportment, the zeal, the prayers, and the miracles of St Laurence were not able to awake many of those hardened sinners whom he laboured to convert. How few among the Jews, especially among the Pharisees, obeyed the voice of our Redeemer himself! If a pastor's labours were constantly attended with easy success, he would meet with nothing for the exercise of his patience by which he is to purchase his own crown and perfect the sanctification of his soul. No degree of obstinacy, malice, or perverseness must either disturb or discourage him. The greater the blindness, the more desperate the spiritual wounds of others are, the more tender ought his compassion to be; the greater his patience and his earnestness in praying and labouring for their recovery and salvation. He is never to despair of anyone so long as the divine mercy still waits for his return. If opportunities of exhorting fail, or if charitable remonstrances only exasperate, so that prudence makes them unseasonable for a time, he ought never to cease earnestly importuning the Father of mercies in their behalf.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 14:*

ST DUBRICIUS, who flourished in that part of the country now called South Wales, Bishop: BLESSED HUGH FARINGDON (or Cook), Abbot of Reading: ST JOSAPHAT, Bishop, killed by heretics, 1623: ST LAURENCE, Archbishop of Dublin, 1180: BLESSED THOMAS PERCY, Earl of Northumberland, martyr, honoured in the dioceses of England on this date: also ST ERCONWALD, an English prince who governed the monastery of Chertsey in the seventh century.

## NOVEMBER 15

### ST GERTRUDE, VIRGIN, ABBESS

(A.D. 1292)

[From her book of Divine Insinuations, and her life compiled by Dom. Mege, prefixed to his edition of that work, in 1664. See also Dr Cave, Hist. Liter. t. ii. p. 301.]

ST GERTRUDE was of an illustrious family, born at Eisleben, or Islebe, in Upper Saxony, and sister to St Mechtildes. At five years of age she was offered to God in the Benedictin nunnery of Rodalsdorf, and at thirty was chosen abbess of that house in 1251; and the year following was obliged to take upon her the government of the monastery of Heldelfs, to which she removed with her nuns. In her youth she studied Latin, as it was then customary for nuns to do; she wrote and composed in that language very well, and was versed in sacred literature. Divine contemplation and devout prayer she always looked upon as the principal duty and employment of her state, and consecrated to those exercises the greatest part of her time. The passion of our Redeemer was the favourite object of her devotions; and in meditating on it, or on the blessed Eucharist, frequently she was not able to contain the torrents of tears which flowed

from her eyes. She spoke of Christ and of the mysteries of his adorable life with so much unction, and in such transports of holy love, as to ravish those who heard her. Ecstacies and raptures of the divine love, and the gifts of divine union in prayer, were familiar to her. She mentions that once hearing those words, “I have seen the Lord face to face,” sung in the church, she saw, as it were, a divine face, most beautiful and charming, whose eyes pierced her heart and filled both her soul and body with inexpressible delight which no tongue could express.<sup>1</sup> The divine love, which burnt in her breast and consumed her soul, seemed the only spring of all her affections and actions. For this precious grace her pure soul was prepared by the crucifixion of her heart to the world and to inordinate self-love in all its shapes. Watching, fasting, abstinence, perfect obedience, and the constant denial of her own will were the means by which she tamed her flesh and extirpated or subdued whatever could oppose the reign of the most holy will of God in her affections. But profound humility and perfect meekness had the chief part in this work, and laid the foundation of the great virtues and graces to which the divine mercy raised her. Though she was possessed of the greatest natural talents and of most extraordinary gifts of divine grace, her mind was penetrated and entirely filled only with the deepest sentiments of her own nothingness, baseness, and imperfections. It was her sincere desire that all others should have the same contempt of her which she had of herself, and she used to say that it seemed to her one of the greatest of all the miracles of God’s infinite goodness that his divine majesty was pleased to suffer the earth to bear her. Though she was the superior and mother of the rest, she behaved towards them as if she had been the lowest servant and one that was unworthy ever to approach them: and such were the sincere sentiments of her heart. How much soever she gave herself up to the exercises of heavenly contemplation, she neglected not the duties of Martha, and was very solicitous in attending to all the necessities of everyone, and in providing all things for them, especially all spiritual helps. Her tender devotion to the mother of God sprang from the ardour of her love for the divine Son. The suffering souls in purgatory had a very great share in her compassion and charity.

We have a living portraiture of her pure and holy soul in her short book of “Divine Insinuations, or Communications and Sentiments of Love,” perhaps the most useful production, next to the writings of St Teresa, with which any female saint ever enriched the church, for nourishing piety in a contemplative state. The saint proposes exercises for the renovation of the baptismal vows, by which the soul entirely renounces the world and herself, consecrates herself to the pure love of God, and devotes herself to pursue in all things his holy will. The like exercises she prescribes for the conversion of a soul to God, and for the renovation of her holy

<sup>1</sup> *Insin. Divin. lib. ii. c. 22.*

spiritual espousals, and the consecration of herself to her Redeemer by a bond of indissoluble love, praying that she may totally die to herself, and be buried in him, so that he alone, who is her holy love, be acquainted with this her hidden state or sepulchre, and that she may have no other employment but that of love, or what his love directs. These sentiments she repeats with admirable variety throughout the work and, in the latter part, dwells chiefly on the most ardent desires of being speedily united to her love in everlasting glory, entreating her divine Redeemer, by all his sufferings and infinite mercies, to cleanse her perfectly from all earthly affections and spots, that she may be admitted to his divine presence. Her desires were at length fulfilled and, having been abbess forty years, she was called to the embraces of her heavenly spouse in 1292, her sister Mechtildes being dead some time before. The last sickness of St Gertrude seemed rather a languishing of divine love than a natural fever; so abundantly did her soul enjoy in it the sweetest comforts and presence of the Holy Ghost. Miracles attested how precious her death was in the sight of God. She is honoured with an office in the Roman Breviary on this day. The Lypsanographia, or catalogue of relics kept in the electoral palace of Brunswick-Lunenbourg, printed at Hanover in 1713, in folio, mentions, amongst others, the relics of St Gertrude in a rich shrine.

The exercises by which St Gertrude made such sublime advances in the school of divine love all tended to the closest union of her heart to God by the most inflamed desires and purest affections: and were directed at the same time to remove all obstacles to this union by cleansing her soul and purifying her affections by tears of compunction, by the renunciation of sensual delights and the most perfect denial of herself. Hence she prayed continually that by the grace of the omnipotent divine love she might be strengthened to resign herself to holy love, so that nothing of self should remain in her, but should be totally consumed by the flame of holy love, like dust carried away by the wind, so as not to leave the least grain or trace behind.<sup>1</sup> For this exterior action, both of self-denial and of charity, zeal, and all other virtues are necessary; but interior exercises are far more essential, in which the soul must frequently in the day raise herself up to God by the most ardent desires of love, praise, and thanksgiving, and study to die to herself by sincere and repeated sentiments of humility, compunction, meekness, patience, and self-denial.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 15:*

ST EUGENIUS, a disciple of St Dionysius; he suffered martyrdom soon after him: ST GERTRUDE, 1292, chosen Abbess of the Benedictine nunnery of Rodalsdorf at thirty years old; her book of visions and revelations is important in mystical theology: ST LEOPOLD, Marquis of Austria, who, on the death of his father in 1096, set himself to make Christians of a very gross and superstitious people: ST MALO or MACLOU, first Bishop of Aleth in Brittany, an Englishman: and BLESSED RICHARD WHITING, Abbot of Glastonbury, and his COMPANION MARTYRS, 1589.

NOVEMBER 16

ST EDMUND, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP  
OF CANTERBURY

(A.D. 1242)

[His life is accurately written by several hands; by his own brother Robert, who accompanied him in his journeys to Rome. (MS. in Bibl. Cotton. incipit. B. Edmundus Cantuar.) Also by Bertrand, the saint's companion and secretary in his exile, and after his death a monk, and at length prior of Pontigny, published by Dom. Martenne (Thesaur. Anecdot. t. iii.), with curious dissertations and remarks. See also Matthew Paris, Nicholas Trivet, Annal. 6, Regum; Wood, Hist. et Antiq. Oxon. pp. 9, 61; Godwin, Praesul. Angl. p. 130; also Testimonia plurimum, de sanctitate Edmundi Cant. MS. in Bibl. Coll. Corp. Christi Oxon. n. 154.]

ST EDMUND RICH was the eldest son of Reynold Rich, a tradesman of Abingdon, in Berkshire, and his wife Mabilia. His parents were but slenderly provided with the goods of this world, but possessed abundantly the true riches of virtue and divine grace. Reynold, from the sale of his stock, leaving a moderate competence for the education of his children and for a foundation for their industry to work upon, committed them to the care of his prudent and virtuous consort; and with her free consent made his religious profession in the monastery of Evesham, where he finished his mortal course with great fervour. Mabilia, who remained in the world, was not behindhand with him in aspiring ardently to Christian perfection. To accomplish the course of her penance, and to tame her flesh, she practised great austerities, and constantly wore a rough hair cloth; she always went to church at midnight to matins, and by her own example excited her children to the heroic practice of virtue. Our saint in his childhood, by her advice, recited the whole psalter on his knees every Sunday and holiday before he broke his fast, and on Fridays contented himself with only bread and water. How zealous soever the mother was in inspiring into the tender minds of her children a contempt of earthly things, and the greatest ardour in the pursuit of virtue, and in suggesting to them every means of attaining to the summit of Christian perfection, Edmund not only complied joyfully with her advice, but always went beyond her directions, desiring in all his actions to carry virtue to the greatest heights; though in all his penances and devotions he studied secrecy as much as possible, and was careful to shun in them the least danger of attachment to his own sense. For that fundamental maxim of virtue he had always before his eyes, that even devotion infected with self-will and humour becomes vicious, and nourishes self-love and self-conceit, the bane of all virtue and grace in the heart. As for our young saint, he seemed to have no will of his own, so mild, complying, and obliging was he to everyone, and so dutiful and obedient to his mother and masters. And the sweetness and cheerfulness wherewith he most readily obeyed, and seemed even to prevent their directions, showed his obedience to be

the interior sacrifice of his heart, in which the essence of that virtue consists; for a mere exterior compliance accompanied with reluctance and, much more, if it break out into complaints and murmuring, is a miserable state of constraint and compulsion, and a wilful and obstinate slavery to self-will, that domestic tyrant which it fosters, arms, and strengthens, instead of subduing it. Abstemiousness and temperance were easy and agreeable, and a penitential life, which appears so difficult to those who have been educated in sloth, softness, and delights, was, as it were, natural to our saint, who had from his cradle, under the direction of his prudent and virtuous mother, inured his senses to frequent privations, his body to little severities, and his will to constant denials, by perfect meekness, humility, charity, and obedience, so that it seemed as naturally pliant to the direction of reason and virtue as a glove is to the hand, to use the expression of one of his historians; and he was always a stranger to the conflicts of headstrong passions.

The saint performed the first part of his studies at Oxford, in which he gave very early indications of a genius above the common standard. It is indeed easy to understand with what ardour and perseverance a person of good abilities, and deeply impressed with a sense of religion, always applies himself to study when this becomes an essential part of his duty to God. An uncommon fervour and assiduity in all religious exercises, and a genuine simplicity in his whole conduct, discovered his internal virtues, and betrayed the desire he had of concealing them. Retirement and prayer were his delight, and he sought no companions but those in whom he observed the like pious inclinations. He was yet young when Mabilia sent him and his brother Robert to finish their studies at Paris. At parting she gave each of them a hair shirt, which she advised them to use two or three days in a week, to fortify their souls against the love of pleasures, a dangerous snare to youth. It was her custom never to send them any linen, clothes, or other things but she made some new instrument of penance a part of her present, to put them in mind of assiduously practising Christian mortification. Edmund had spent some time in that seat of arts and sciences when his mother, falling sick of a lingering illness and perceiving that she drew near her end, ordered him over to England that she might recommend to him the care of settling his brother and his two sisters in the world. Before she died she gave him her last blessing. The saint begged the same for his brother and sisters, but she answered, "I have given them my blessing in you; for through you they will share abundantly in the blessings of heaven."

St Edmund had no sooner settled his sisters but he went back to Paris to pursue his studies. Whilst he lived at Oxford he had consecrated himself to God by a vow of perpetual chastity, under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, in whom, under God, he placed a special confidence; and this

vow he observed with the utmost fidelity his whole life. In his study he had an image of the Mother of God before his eyes, round which were represented the mysteries of our redemption; and in the midst of his most profound studies, his frequent ejaculations to God were so ardent, that in them he frequently went into raptures. How desirous soever he appeared to become learned, his zeal to become a saint was much greater. By virtue he sanctified all his studies, by his progress in learning he was the admiration of his masters, and for the purity of his life he was regarded as a miracle of sanctity. He constantly attended at the midnight office in St Martin's Church, and after that was over, spent some hours there in prayer, heard early mass in the morning, and then repaired to the public school without taking food or rest. He went to vespers every day; studies, works of charity, holy meditation, and private prayer took up the rest of his time. He fasted much, and every Friday on bread and water; wore a hair shirt and mortified his senses in everything. Allowing very little for his own necessities, he employed in alms the rest of the money which he received for his own uses. He seldom ate above once a day, and then very sparingly, slept on the bare floor, or on a bench, and for thirty years never undressed himself to sleep and never lay down on a bed, though he had one in his room, decently covered, in order to conceal his austerities. After matins, at midnight, he usually continued his meditation and prayer till morning, and very rarely slept any more; if he did, it was only leaning his head against the wall as he knelt or sat a little while. Many years before he was in holy orders, he said every day the priest's office, with salutations of the wounds of our Divine Redeemer and a meditation on his sufferings. After he had gone through a course of the liberal arts and mathematics, and had taken the degree of master of arts, he was employed six years in teaching those sciences, especially the mathematics. He seemed one night to see his mother in a dream, who, pointing to certain geometrical figures before him, asked him what all that signified? and bade him rather make the adorable Trinity the object of his studies. From that time he gave himself up entirely to the study of theology. He interpreted the holy scriptures some time at Paris. It was his custom always to kiss that divine book out of religious respect as often as he took it into his hands. As soon as he was ordained priest he began to preach with wonderful unction and fruit. Even the lectures which he delivered in school, and his ordinary discourse, were seasoned with heavenly sentiments of the divine love and praises, and breathed a spirit of God which extremely edified all that were present. Several of his auditors and scholars became afterwards eminent for sanctity and learning. Seven left his school in one day to take the Cistercian habit; one of whom was Stephen, afterwards abbot of Clairvaux and founder of the Bernardins at Paris.

Returning to England, he was the first that taught Aristotle's logic at

Oxford,<sup>1</sup> where he remained from 1219 to 1226; but in frequent missions travelled often through all Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire, preaching the word of God with great fruit and zeal. After having refused many ecclesiastical preferments, he at length accepted of a canonry, with the dignity of treasurer in the Cathedral of Salisbury; but gave far the greatest part of the revenue to the poor, leaving himself destitute the greatest part of the year. He had not been long in this post, when the pope sent him an order to preach the crusade against the Saracens, with the commission to receive an honorary stipend for his maintenance from the several churches in which he should discharge that office. The saint executed the commission with great zeal; but would receive no honorary stipend, or any kind of present for his maintenance. As he was preaching in the open air near the church at Worcester, a heavy shower fell all round the place, but the saint having given his blessing and bade the people not to disperse, not a single drop touched any of them or fell on the spot where they stood. When he preached, the words which came from his inflamed heart were words of fire, which powerfully converted souls. Persons, the most profoundly learned, were moved to tears at his sermons, and many became imitators of his penance and virtues. William, surnamed Long-spear, the famous Earl of Salisbury, who had lived a long time in the neglect of the essential duties of a Christian, and without ever approaching the sacraments, was so entirely converted by hearing a sermon which the saint preached, and by conversing some hours with him, that from that time he laid aside all other business to make the salvation of his soul his whole employment. The saint formed many excellent men of prayer, and was himself one of the most experienced doctors of an interior life, and most enlightened contemplatives in the church. What he chiefly inculcated was a sincere spirit of humility, mortification, and holy prayer; and he was principally solicitous to teach Christians to pray in affection and spirit. “A hundred thousand persons,” says the saint,<sup>2</sup> “are deceived in multiplying prayers. I would rather say five words devoutly with my heart, than five thousand which my soul does not relish with affection and understanding. ‘Sing to the Lord wisely.’<sup>3</sup> What a man repeats by his mouth, that let him feel in his soul.” A late French critical author<sup>4</sup> of a book, entitled the Tradition of the Church concerning Contemplation, says of St Edmund, “He applied himself from his youth to the contemplation of eternal truths; and so well united in himself (which is very rare) the science of the heart with that of the school, the mystical theology with the speculative, that by letting into his heart the lights of his understanding, he became a perfect contemplative, or mystic theologian; and he has no less enlightened the church by the sanctity of his life, than by the admirable

<sup>1</sup> Wood, Hist. et Antiq. Oxon. t. i. p. 81; t. ii. pp. 9 et 81.

<sup>2</sup> St Edm. Cant. in Speculo, Bibl. patr. t. xiii. p. 362.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. lvi.

<sup>4</sup> F. Honoratus of St Mary, in his historical table of contemplative writers, t. i. p. 4.

spiritual tract, called the *Mirror of the Church*, in which are found many excellent things relating to contemplation."

The see of Canterbury had long been vacant when Pope Gregory IX pitched upon Edmund to fill it. The chapter of Canterbury was unanimous in his favour, King Henry III gave his consent, and the election was confirmed by his holiness. Matters were gone thus far, when a deputation was sent to Salisbury to give notice to the saint of his election and to conduct him to his flock. Edmund, who was till then a stranger to these proceedings, protested loudly against the violence that was offered him. The deputies thus repulsed by him applied to the Bishop of Salisbury, who exerted his authority to compel the saint to acquiesce. Edmund submitted after much resistance, but had not quite conquered his fears and difficulties when he was consecrated on the 2nd of April 1234. This dignity made no alteration in the humble sentiments or behaviour of our saint. He had still the same mean opinion of himself, and observed the same simplicity and modesty in his dress, notwithstanding the contrary fashions of the bishops of that age. His chief employment was to inquire into and relieve the corporal and spiritual necessities of his flock, and he soon got the reputation of a primitive pastor. His revenues he chiefly consecrated to the poor, and had a particular care to provide portions for young women whose circumstances would have otherwise exposed them to great dangers. He gave vice no quarter, maintained church discipline with an apostolic vigour, and was most scrupulously solicitous and careful that justice was impartially administered in all his courts, abhorred the very shadow of bribes in all his officers, and detested the love of filthy lucre, especially in the clergy. For the reformation of abuses he published his Constitutions in thirty-six canons, extant in Lindwood, Spelman, Wilkins, Johnson, and in Labbe's edition of the councils.

Amidst a great corruption of manners and decay of discipline his zeal could not fail to raise him adversaries. Even the children of his own mother, the monks of his chapter, and many of his clergy, who ought to have been his comfort and his support, were the first to oppose him and defeat his holy endeavours for restoring regularity, the purity of Christian morals, and the true spirit of our divine religion, which its founder came from heaven to plant amongst men.

There perhaps was never a greater lover of charity and peace than our saint: yet he chose to see his dearest friends break with him, and turn his implacable enemies and persecutors, rather than approve or tolerate the least point which seemed to endanger both his own and their souls. And, from their malice, he reaped the invaluable advantage of holy patience. For their bitterness and injustice against him never altered the peace of his mind, or his dispositions of the most sincere charity and tenderness toward them: and he never seemed sensible of any injuries or injustices

that were done him. When some told him that he carried his charity too far, he made answer: "Why should others cause me to offend God, or to lose the charity which I owe and bear them? if any persons were to cut off my arms, or pluck out my eyes, they would be the dearer to me, and would seem the more to deserve my tenderness and compassion." He often used to say, that tribulations were a milk which God prepared for the nourishment of his soul, and that if ever they had any bitterness in them, this was mixed with much sweetness, adding that they were, as it were, a wild honey with which his soul had need to be fed in the desert of this world, like John Baptist in the wilderness. He added that Christ had taught him by his own example to go to meet and salute his persecutors, and only to answer their injuries by earnestly recommending their souls to his heavenly Father. The more the saint suffered from the world the greater were the consolations he received from God, and the more eagerly he plunged his heart into the ocean of his boundless sweetness, in heavenly contemplation and prayer. Nicholas Trivet, a learned English Dominican, in his accurate history of the reigns of six kings from Stephen,<sup>1</sup> tells us that St Edmund had always some pious and learned Dominican with him wherever he went, and that one of those who lived to be very old, assured him and many others that the saint was found in a wonderful ecstasy: "One day," says he, "when the saint had invited several persons of great quality to dine with him at his palace, he made them wait a long while before he came out to them. When dinner had been ready some time, St Richard, who was his chancellor, went to call him, and found him in the chapel raised a considerable height above the ground in prayer." St Edmund, while he was archbishop, kept a decent table for others, but contrived secretly to practise at it himself the greatest abstemiousness and mortification.

The saint's trials grew every day heavier and threatened to overwhelm him; yet he was always calm, as the halcyon riding on the waves amidst a violent tempest. King Henry III being, by his bad economy and the insatiable thirst of his minions, always needy, not content to exact of his subjects both clergy and laity exorbitant sums, kept bishoprics, abbeys, and other benefices a long time vacant, only that under the title of protecting the goods of the church he might appropriate the revenues to his own use; and when he nominated new incumbents, preferred his own creatures who were usually strangers, or at least persons no ways qualified for such posts. St Edmund, not bearing an abuse which was a source of infinite disorders, obtained of Pope Gregory IX a bull, by which he was empowered and ordered to fill such vacant benefices, in case the king nominated no one within six months after they fell vacant. But, upon the king's complaint, his holiness repealed this concession. The zealous

<sup>1</sup> Annal. 6 Reg. Angl. ad an. 1240.

prelate, fearing to injure his own conscience and appear to connive at crying abuses which he was not able to redress, passed secretly into France, thus testifying to the whole world how much he condemned such fatal enormities. Making his way to the court of France, he was graciously received by St Lewis, all the royal family and city of Paris, where his virtue was well known. Thence he retired to Pontigny, a Cistercian abbey in Champagne, in the diocese of Auxerre, which had formerly harboured two of his predecessors, St Thomas, under Henry II, and Stephen Langton, in the late reign of King John. In this retreat the saint gave himself up to fasting and prayer; and preached frequently in the neighbouring churches. His bad state of health obliging him, in compliance to the advice of physicians to change air, he removed to a convent of regular canons at Soissy or Seysi. Seeing the monks of Pontigny in tears at his departure, he told them he should return to them on the feast of St Edmund the Martyr; which was verified by his body, after his death, being brought thither on that day. His distemper increasing, he desired to receive the viaticum and said, in presence of the holy sacrament: "In Thee, O Lord, I have believed: Thee I have preached and taught. Thou art my witness, that I have desired nothing on earth but Thee alone. As Thou seest my heart to desire only Thy holy will, may it be accomplished in me." After receiving the holy sacrament, he continued that whole day in wonderful devotion and spiritual jubilation, so as to seem entirely to forget and not to feel his distemper: tears of joy and piety never ceased trickling down his cheeks, and the serenity of his countenance discovered the interior contentment of his holy soul. This, his joy, he expressed by alluding to a proverb then in vogue, as follows: "Men say that delight (or sport) goeth into the belly; but I say, it goeth into the heart."<sup>1</sup> This inexpressible interior comfort which his soul enjoyed, wonderfully discovered itself by a cheerfulness and glow which cannot be imagined, but which then appeared in his cheeks, which were before as pale as ashes. The next day he received the holy oils, and from that time always held a crucifix in his hands, kissing and saluting affectionately the precious wounds, particularly that of the side, keeping it long applied to his lips with many tears and sighs, accompanied with wonderful interior cheerfulness and joy to his last breath. From his tender years he had always found incredible sweetness in the name of Jesus, which he had constantly in his heart, and which he repeated most affectionately in his last moments; in his agony he did not lie down but sat in a chair, sometimes leaning upon his hand and sometimes he stood up. At length, fainting away, without any contortions or convulsions, he calmly expired, never seeming to interrupt those holy exercises which conducted his happy soul to the company of the blessed, there to continue the same

<sup>1</sup> *Men seizh game God en wonbe ac ich segge, game God en herte.* Eustachius Monachus, S. Edmundi capellanus et secretarius, inter testimonia de S. Edm. MS.

praises, world without end. St Edmund died at Soissy, near Provins in Champagne, on the 16th of November 1242, according to Godwin, having been archbishop eight years. His bowels were buried at Provins; but his body was conveyed to Pontigny and, after seven days, deposited with great solemnity. Many miraculous cures wrought through his intercession proclaimed his power with God in the kingdom of his glory, and the saint was canonized by Innocent V in 1246. In 1247 his body was taken up and found entire, and the joints flexible: it was translated with great pomp in presence of St Lewis, Queen Blanche, and a number of prelates and noblemen. These precious relics remain to this day the glory of that monastery which, from our saint, is called St Edmund's of Pontigny. Dom. Martenne, the learned Maurist monk, tells us, that he saw and examined his body, which is perfectly without the least sign of corruption: the head is seen naked through a crystal glass; the rest of the body is covered by his pontifical garments: the colour of the flesh is everywhere very white. It is placed above the high altar in a shrine of wood, gilt over. One arm was separated at the desire of St Lewis, who caused it to be shut in a gold case so as to be seen through crystal glasses. But the flesh of this arm is black, which is ascribed to an embalming when it was taken from the body. English women were allowed to enter this church, though the Cistercian Order forbade the entrance of women into their churches, which now is nowhere observed among them, except in the churches of Citeaux and Clairvaux. In the treasury at Pontigny are shown St Edmund's pastoral ring, chalice, and paten; also his chasuble, or vestment in which he said mass, which is quite round at the bottom, according to the ancient form of such vestments. Martenne adds, that the conservation of this sacred body free from corruption is evidently miraculous, and cannot be ascribed to any embalming during above five hundred years, without any change even in the colour.<sup>1</sup> Several miracles wrought through this saint's intercession, were authentically approved and attested by many English bishops, as Stephen, a subdeacon who had been six years his secretary, assures us, who adds: "Numberless miracles have been performed by his invocation since his deposition, of the truth whereof I am no less certain than if I had seen them with my own eyes." One he mentions that was wrought upon himself. He had suffered an intolerable toothache, with a painful inflammation of his left jaw, for two days, without being able to take any rest till, calling to mind his blessed father Edmund, he with prayers and tears implored his intercession and quickly fell into a gentle slumber: when he waked he found himself perfectly freed from the toothache and the swelling entirely dissipated.

St Edmund was a great proficient in the school of divine love and heavenly contemplation, because he learned perfectly to die to himself.

<sup>1</sup> See Voy. Littér. de Deux Religieux Bened. pp. 57, 58.

A sincere spirit of humility, meekness, patience, obedience, compunction, and self-denial, with the practice of self-examination, penance, and assiduous prayer, must crucify inordinate self-love, disengage the affections from earthly things, and, purifying the heart, open it to the rays of divine light and grace.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 16 :*

ST EDMUND OF CANTERBURY (EDMUND RICH), son of a tradesman, became a monk at Evesham and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. After many difficulties with Henry III he died in exile, 1242: ST EUCHERIUS, who next to St Irenæus has done greatest honour to the Church of Lyons, of which see he was Bishop. A defender of the Church against the Semi-pelagians.

### NOVEMBER 17

#### ST HUGH, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF LINCOLN

THE foundations of an interior life are most safely laid in holy solitude, which is the best preparation for the functions of the active life and the support of a spirit of piety amidst its distractions. In the desert of Chartreuse St Hugh learned first to govern himself, and treasured up in his heart the most lively sentiments of pure and perfect virtue, the most essential qualification for a minister of Christ. He was born of a good family in Burgundy in 1140: lost his mother before he was eight years old, and was educated from that age in a convent of regular canons, situated near his father's seat, who, after having served as an officer in the army with great reputation for honour and piety, retired himself to the same place, and there ended his days in the exercises of a devout and penitential religious life. Hugh, being blessed with a happy genius and good natural parts, made great progress in every branch of learning to which he applied himself. A venerable ancient priest was appointed by the abbot to instruct him in his studies and in religious discipline, whose serious admonitions made a deep impression on his soul. When he was nineteen years old the abbot took the saint with him to Chartreuse, near Grenoble, on an annual visit which he was accustomed to make to that holy company. The retirement and silence of the desert, and the assiduous contemplation and saintly deportment of the monks who inhabited it, kindled in Hugh's breast a strong desire of embracing that institute. Nor were the canons, his brethren, able to dissuade him from this resolution after his return; so that being persuaded that God called him to this state, he secretly went back to the Chartreuse, and was admitted to the habit. The interior conflicts which he sustained, served to purify his soul and make him more fervent and watchful. Under these trials he was often refreshed with consolations and great heavenly sweetness; and by mortification and humble continual prayer, the fiery darts of the enemy were at length extinguished. The time approaching when he was to be promoted to

priest's orders, an old father whom he served according to the custom of the Order, asked him if he was willing to be ordained priest. Hugh answered him with simplicity, out of the vehement desire he had of offering daily to God the holy victim of the altar, that there was nothing in the world he more earnestly desired. The old man, fearing the danger of presumption and a want of the great apprehension which everyone is bound to have of that tremendous function, said to him, with a severe countenance: "How dare you aspire to a degree, to which no one, how holy soever, is advanced but with trembling and by constraint?" At this rebuke St Hugh, struck with holy fear, fell on the ground and begged pardon with many tears. The other, moved at his humility, told him he knew the purity of his desires; and said he would be advanced not only to the priesthood, but also to the episcopal dignity. The saint had passed ten years in his private cell when the general procuratorship of the monastery was committed to him: in which weighty charge the reputation of his prudence and sanctity was spread over all France.

King Henry II of England founded the first house of Carthusian monks in England at Witham, in Somersetshire; but so great difficulties occurred in the undertaking, under the two first priors, that the monastery could not be settled. The king, therefore, sent Reginald, Bishop of Bath, with other honourable persons, to the great Chartreuse, to desire that the holy monk, Hugh, might be sent over to take upon him the government of this monastery. After much debating in the house, it was determined that it became not Christian charity so to confine their views to one family as to refuse what was required for the benefit of many others; and though the saint protested that of all others he was most unfit for the charge, he was ordered by the chapter to accompany the deputies to England. As soon as he landed, without going to court, he went directly to Witham, and wonderfully comforted and encouraged the few monks he found there. Being sent for by the king, he received from his royal bounty many presents and a large provision of all things necessary for his monastery, and set himself to finish the buildings; at which he worked with his own hands and carried stones and mortar on his shoulders. By the humility and meekness of his deportment, and the sanctity of his manners, he gained the hearts of the most savage and inveterate enemies of that holy foundation, and several persons, charmed with the piety of the good prior and his little colony, began to relish their close solitude, and, abandoning the cares of the world, consecrated themselves to God under the discipline of the saint, who became in a short time the father of a numerous and flourishing family. The king, as he returned with his army from Normandy to England, was in great danger at sea, in a furious storm which defeated all the art of the sailors. All fell to their prayers: but their safety seemed despaired of, when the king made aloud the following address to heaven: "O blessed God, whom

the prior of Witham truly serves, vouchsafe through the merits and intercession of thy faithful servant, with an eye of pity to regard our distress and affliction." This invocation was scarce finished but a calm ensued, and the whole company, who never ceased to give thanks to the divine clemency, continued their voyage safe to England.

The confidence which King Henry reposed in St Hugh, above all other persons in his dominions, was from that time much increased. The see of Lincoln, having been kept by his majesty some years vacant, he was pleased to give leave to the dean and chapter to choose a pastor, and the election fell upon St Hugh. His excuses were not admitted, and he was obliged by the authority of Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, to drop the strong opposition which he had made, and to receive the episcopal consecration in 1186, on the 21st of September. As soon as he was raised to the episcopal chair, he engaged several clergymen of the greatest learning and piety to be his assistants; and he employed all the authority which his station gave him in restoring ecclesiastical discipline, especially amongst his clergy. By sermons and private exhortations he laboured to quicken in all men the spirit of faith, and in ordinary conversation incited others to divine love by instructions adapted to their particular condition and circumstances; but was always cheerful and affable with decent gravity. In administering the sacraments or consecrating churches, he sometimes spent whole days, beginning before break of day and persevering some hours in the night, without allowing himself any corporal refection. Good part of his time he always bestowed in inquiring into and relieving the necessities of the poor, whom he frequently visited and affectionately comforted. The hospitals of lepers he attended above others, and with singular tenderness kissed the most loathsome ulcers of the infected. To one who jeeringly said to him that St Martin did so to heal their ulcers, which he did not do, the good bishop answered: "St Martin's kiss healed the leper's flesh; but their kiss heals my soul." In travelling he was so collected that he usually never cast his eyes about him or saw anything but the mane of the horse on which he rode. Devotion seemed always to give him vigour and strength, and the sentiments with which he nourished his soul in reciting the psalms seemed more than human. He was so punctual in observing the canonical hours of the divine office, that once he would not stir out of the inn till he had said his morning office, though his attendants brought him word trembling, that if he did not get away as fast as he could his life would be in danger from a troop of madmen who were coming into the road where he was to pass, and who spared nothing that came in their way.

Henry II, a prince most impatient of advice and uncontrollable in his resolutions, stood in awe of this holy prelate, and received his admonitions with seeming deference, though it was only by afflictions in the decline of life that he learned effectually to reform his passions. The king's foresters,

or overseers of the royal forests and chases, exercised an inhuman tyranny in the country, putting to death, or maiming upon the spot, anyone who had killed or maimed a wild beast or any game, whatever loss the farmers sustained by the deer in their harvest or gardens; and these foresters, upon the slightest suspicion, put whomever they pleased to the water-ordeal trial, which, notwithstanding the prohibitions of the church, remained still in frequent use among these officers of the crown, who immediately put to death whoever was cast by that trial. A company of these rangers had, upon a slight occasion, laid hands on a clerk and condemned him in a considerable sum of money. St Hugh, after due summons and a triple citation, excommunicated the head of them. This action King Henry took very ill. However, he dissembled his resentment and soon after, by a messenger and letters, requested of him a prebend, then vacant in the diocese of Lincoln, in favour of one of his courtiers. St Hugh, having read the petition, returned this answer by the messenger: "These places are to be conferred upon clerks, not upon courtiers; nor does the king want means to reward his servants." Neither could the bishop be prevailed upon, at the king's request, to absolve the ranger till he acknowledged his crime with signs of repentance. Hereupon his majesty sent for the bishop and summing up the favours he had done him, upbraided him with ingratitude and complained bitterly of the treatment he had received. The bishop, no ways troubled or daunted, with a grave and sweet countenance demonstrated to him how, in the whole affair he had had a regard purely to the service of God and to the salvation of his majesty's soul, which incurred manifest danger if oppressors of the church were protected or ecclesiastical benefices rashly conferred on unworthy persons. The king was so moved by his discourse as to remain perfectly satisfied. The ranger showed himself penitent, and was absolved by the bishop in the usual form, in a public manner, and by his exhortation appeared truly reformed, and from that time became the saint's most steady friend. It was a custom for the clergy to present yearly a precious mantle to the king at the charge of the people, for which they made a large collection and retained the overplus for their own use. This St Hugh abolished, and obtained of the king a renunciation of the present. Punishments in the ecclesiastical court, consisting chiefly in pecuniary mulcts which the rich little regarded, St Hugh changed them into other chastisements which carried with them marks of infamy. St Hugh finished the building of his cathedral. Henry II died in 1189, after a reign of thirty-four years.

Hugh, with the same liberty, exhorted King Richard I to shun incontinence and all oppression of his subjects, and defended the immunities of the church in his reign, and in that of King John, who came to the crown in 1199. St Hugh was sent ambassador by this latter into France, to King Philip Augustus, to conclude a peace between the two crowns,

in which negotiation the reputation of his sanctity contributed greatly to the success. This important affair being finished, he paid a visit to his brethren at the grand Chartreuse. In his return, whilst he lodged at a Chartreuse called Arneria, some of the monks asked him what news? At which question he was startled, and answered, that a bishop who is engaged in the commerce of the world may sometimes hear and tell news; but that such inquiries in religious men are an idle curiosity and a dissipation repugnant to their state. The saint arrived at London just as a national council was ready to be opened at Lincoln; it was his intention to assist at it; but he was seized with a fever which followed a loss of appetite he had been afflicted with some time, and which the author of his life attributes to his excessive abstemiousness. He distinctly foretold his death; spent almost his whole time in fervent addresses to God, or to the Blessed Virgin, or in devout colloquies with his angel-guardian, or the saints. He received the viaticum and extreme unction on St Matthew's day, but survived till the 17th of November. On that day he caused many monks and priests, besides his chaplains, to recite the divine office in his chamber. Seeing them weep, he said many tender things to comfort them, and laying his hand upon them one by one, recommended them to the divine custody. His voice beginning to fail, he ordered the floor to be swept and a cross of blessed ashes to be strewed upon it; and whilst the ninetieth psalm at Compline was said, would be lifted out of bed and laid upon that cross, in which posture, as he was repeating the canticle, *Nunc Dimittis*, &c., he calmly expired, in the year of our Lord 1200, of his age sixty, of his episcopal charge fifteen. His body was embalmed, and with great pomp conveyed from London to Lincoln, where two kings, John of England and William of Scotland (the latter, who had dearly loved the saint, bathed in tears), three archbishops, fourteen bishops, above a hundred abbots, and a great number of earls and barons, came out to meet the corpse, and the two kings put their shoulders under the bier as it was carried into the church. Three paralytic persons, and some others, recovered their health at his tomb. St Hugh was canonized by Honorius III or IV, and is named in the Roman Martyrology. See his life, written by Adam, D.D., a Carthusian at London, in 1340.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 17:*

ST ANIAN, in French AGNAN, Bishop of Orleans, famous in the Gallican Church: ST DRONVSRS, called THE GREAT, by St Basil and called the Doctor of the Catholic Church by St Athanasius: ST GREGORY OF TOURS, Bishop, the second ornament of the Church of Tours after the great St Martin: ST GREGORY, surnamed THAUMATURGUS or worker of wonders, because of his extraordinary miracles, Bishop: ST HUGH, first Bishop of Lincoln (a Carthusian monk, canonized by Pope Honorius III twenty years after his death): in England, ST HILDA, Abbess and Patron of Whitby is honoured on this date: but Butler places this feast on the following day.

NOVEMBER 18

DEDICATION OF THE CHURCHES OF ST PETER AND  
ST PAUL AT ROME

THE Vatican Church, dedicated in honour of St Peter, is the second patriarchal church at Rome, and in it reposes one half of the precious remains of the bodies of SS. Peter and Paul. The tombs of the great conquerors and lords of the world have been long since destroyed and forgotten; but those of the martyrs are glorious by the veneration which the faithful pay to their memory.

The body of St Peter is said to have been buried immediately after his martyrdom, upon this spot, on the Vatican hill,<sup>1</sup> which was then without the walls and near the suburb inhabited by the Jews. The remains of this apostle were removed hence into the cemetery of Calixtus, but brought back to the Vatican. Those of St Paul were deposited on the Ostian Way, where his church now stands. The tombs of the two princes of the apostles, from the beginning, were visited by Christians with extraordinary devotion above those of other martyrs. Caius, the learned and eloquent priest of Rome, in 210, in his dialogue with Proclus the Montanist,<sup>2</sup> speaks thus of them: "I can show you the trophies of the apostles. For, whether you go to the Vatican hill, or to the Ostian road, you will meet with the monuments of them who by their preaching and miracles founded this church." The Christians, even in the times of persecution, adorned the tombs of the martyrs and the oratories which they erected over them, where they frequently prayed. Constantine the Great, after founding the Lateran Church, built seven other churches at Rome and many more in other parts of Italy. The first of these were the churches of St Peter on the Vatican hill (where a temple of Apollo and another of Idæa, mother of the gods,<sup>3</sup> before stood) in honour of the place where the prince of the apostles had suffered martyrdom and was buried;<sup>4</sup> and that of St Paul, at his tomb on the Ostian road. The yearly revenues which Constantine granted to all these churches, amounted to seventeen thousand seven hundred and seventy golden pence, which is above thirteen thousand pounds sterling, counting the prices, gold for gold; but, as the value of gold and silver was then much higher than at present, the sum in our money at this day would be much greater. These churches were built by Constantine in so stately and magnificent a manner as to vie with the finest structures in the empire, as appears from the description which

<sup>1</sup> See Onuphrius de 7, Urbis Basilicis.<sup>2</sup> Ap. Eus. Hist. lib. ii. c. 25.<sup>3</sup> See Blanchini, Pref. in Pontific. p. 72.<sup>4</sup> Foggini de Rom. St Petri Itin. Exerc. 17, p. 408.

Eusebius gives us of the Church of Tyre; for we find that the rest were erected upon the same model, which was consequently of great antiquity. St Peter's Church on the Vatican, being fallen to decay, it was begun to be rebuilt under Julius II in 1506, and was dedicated by Urban VIII in 1626, on this day; the same on which the dedication of the old church was celebrated. The precious remains of many popes, martyrs, and other saints, are deposited partly under the altars of this vast and beautiful church, and partly in a spacious subterraneous church under the other. But the richest treasure of this venerable place consists in the relics of SS. Peter and Paul, which lie in a sumptuous vault beyond the middle of the church, towards the upper end, under a magnificent altar at which only the pope says mass, unless he commissions another to officiate there. This sacred vault is called The confession of St Peter, or The threshold of the Apostles (*Limina Apostolorum*), to which devout persons have flocked in pilgrimages from the primitive ages.

Churches are dedicated only to God, though often under the patronage of some saint; that the faithful may be excited to implore, with united suffrages, the intercession of such a saint, and that churches may be distinguished by bearing different titles.<sup>1</sup> "Neither do we," says St Austin, "erect churches or appoint priesthoods, sacred rites, and sacrifices to the martyrs; because, not the martyrs, but the God of the martyrs is our God. Who, among the faithful, ever heard a priest standing at the altar which is erected over the body of a martyr to the honour and worship of God say, in praying, We offer up sacrifices to thee, O Peter, or Paul, or Cyprian; when at their memories (or titular altars) it is offered to God, who made them both men and martyrs, and has associated them to his angels in heavenly honour."<sup>2</sup> And again,<sup>3</sup> "We build not churches to martyrs as to gods, but memories as to men departed this life, whose souls live with God. Nor do we erect altars to sacrifice on them to the martyrs, but to the God of the martyrs and our God." Constantine the Great gave proofs of his piety and religion by the foundation of so many magnificent churches, in which he desired that the name of God should be glorified on earth to the end of time. Do we show ours by our awful deportment and devotion in holy places, and by our assiduity in frequenting them? God is everywhere present, and is to be honoured by the homages of our affections in all places. But in those which are sacred to him, in which our most holy mysteries are performed, and in which his faithful servants unite their suffrages, greater is the glory which redounds to him from them, and he is usually

<sup>1</sup> See Catech. of Montpell. t. ii., near the end.

<sup>2</sup> St Aug. lib. viii. de Civ. Dei, c. 27, t. vii. p. 217.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. lib. xxii. c. 10. p. 673. See this point treated at large by Thomassin, *Tr. sur la Discipline de l'Eglise*, and among the Protestants by Hooker, *On Ecclesiastical Polity*, b. 5.

more ready to receive our requests—the prayers of many assembled together being a holy violence to his mercy.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 18:*

THE DEDICATION OF THE CHURCHES OF SS. PETER AND PAUL AT ROME: ST ALPHAEUS, ST ZACAEUS, ST ROMANUS and ST BARULUS, martyrs, four heroic souls, of whom St Romanus is perhaps the most illustrious; though he suffered at Antioch, he was a native of Palestine: ST HILDA or HILD, greatly honoured in the north of England. She ruled over a double monastery of monks and nuns at Whitby. She had been baptized with Hereric, the king's nephew, by St Paulinus: ST ODO, Abbot of Cluni, given to prayer and piety from his childhood, he received the tonsure at nineteen and from that time "he bade adieu to Virgil and other profane authors."

### NOVEMBER 19

## ST ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY, WIDOW (A.D. 1231)

[Her life compiled by Cæsarius, monk of Heisterbach, is lost. Theodoric of Thuringia, a Dominican (who seems to be the famous Theodoric of Apoldo, in 1289, author of the life of St Dominic), wrote that of St Elizabeth, in eight books, extant in Canisius. (Lect. Antiq. t. v.) Lambecius (t. ii. Bibl. Vind.) published an additional fragment, with several pieces relative to her canonization. Her life by James Montanus of Spire, published by Sedulius, abridged by D'Andilly, &c., is taken from the work of Theodoric. The letter of the holy priest, Conrad of Marpurg, the saint's confessor, to Pope Gregory IX, soon after her death, bears authentic testimony to her heroic virtues. Conrad's letter is published in an Appendix to the Byzantine Historians, printed at Venice, in 1723. It is accompanied with the authentic relation of miracles examined before Sifrid, Archbishop of Mentz, Reymund, the Cistercian Abbot of Eberbac, and Master or Doctor Conrad, preacher of the word of God, by commission of the holy see, who jointly sent the relation to the Pope. See also St Bonaventure, Serm. de St Elizabeth, t. v.]

ELIZABETH, daughter to Alexander II, the valiant and religious King of Hungary, and his queen Gertrude, daughter to the Duke of Carinthia, was born in Hungary in 1207. Herman, Landgrave of Thuringia and Hesse, had a son born about the same time and named Lewis. This prince obtained, by ambassadors, a promise from the King of Hungary that his daughter should be given in marriage to his new-born son; and, to secure the effect of this engagement, at the landgrave's request, the princess at four years of age was sent to his court, and there brought up under the care of a virtuous lady. Five years after, Herman died, and Lewis became landgrave. Elizabeth, from her cradle, was so happily prevented with the love of God, that no room for creatures could be found in her heart; and though surrounded and, as it were, besieged by worldly pleasures in their most engaging shapes, she had no relish for them, prayed with an astonishing recollection, and seemed scarce to know any other use of money than to give it to the poor; for her father allowed her, till her marriage was solemnized, a competent yearly revenue for maintaining a court suitable to her rank. This child of heaven, in her very recreations, studied to practise frequent humiliations and self-denials; and stole often to the chapel and there knelt down and said a short prayer before every altar, bowing her body reverently, or, if nobody was there, prostrating herself upon the ground. If she found the doors of the chapel in the palace shut, not to

lose her labour, she knelt down at the threshold, and always put up her petition to the throne of God. Her devotion she indulged with more liberty in her private closet. She was very devout to her angel-guardian and the saints, particularly St John the Evangelist. She was educated with Agnes, sister to the young landgrave, and upon their first appearing together at church, they were dressed alike and wore coronets set with jewels. At their entering the house of God, Sophia, the landgrave's mother, observing our saint take off her coronet, asked why she did so: to which the princess replied, that she could not bear to appear with jewels on her head where she saw that of Jesus Christ crowned with thorns. Agnes and her mother, who were strangers to such kind of sentiments, and fond of what Elizabeth trampled upon, conceived an aversion for the young princess, and said, that since she seemed to have so little relish for a court, a convent would be the properst place for her. The courtiers carried their reflections much further, and did all in their power to bring the saint into contempt; saying, that neither her fortune nor her person was such as the landgrave had a right to expect, that he had no inclination for her, and that she would either be sent back to Hungary, or married to some nobleman in the country. These taunts and trials were more severe and continual, as the landgrave, Herman, dying when Elizabeth was only nine years old, the government fell into the hands of his widow, in the name of her son, till he should be of age. These persecutions and injuries were, to the saint, occasions of the greatest spiritual advantages: for by them she daily learned a more perfect contempt of all earthly things.

The saint was in her fourteenth year when Lewis, the young landgrave, returned home, after a long absence, on account of his education. Address in martial exercises and other great accomplishments introduced the young prince into the world with a mighty reputation: but nothing was so remarkable in him as a sincere love of piety. The eminent virtue of Elizabeth gave him the highest esteem for her person. However, he seldom saw or spoke to her, even in public, and never in private, till the question was one day put to him, what his thoughts were with regard to marrying her, and he was told what rumours were spread in the court to her disadvantage. Hereat he expressed much displeasure and said, that he prized her virtue above all the mountains of gold and rubies that the world could afford. Forthwith he sent her, by a nobleman, a glass, garnished with precious stones of inestimable value, with two crystals opening on each side; in the one of which was a looking-glass, on the other a figure of Christ crucified was most curiously wrought. And not long after he solemnized his marriage with her, and the ceremony was performed with the utmost pomp and with extraordinary public rejoicings. The stream of public applause followed the favour of the prince; the whole court expressed the most profound veneration for the saint, and all the

clouds which had so long hung over her head were at once dispersed. Conrad of Marpurg, a most holy and learned priest and an eloquent pathetic preacher whose disinterestedness and love of holy poverty, mortified life, and extraordinary devotion and spirit of prayer, rendered him a model to the clergy of that age, was the person whom she chose for her spiritual director, and to his advice she submitted herself in all things relating to her spiritual concerns. This holy and experienced guide, observing how deep root the seeds of virtue had taken in her soul, applied himself by cultivating them to conduct her to the summit of Christian perfection, and encouraged her in the path of mortification and penance, but was obliged often to moderate her corporal austerities by the precept of obedience. The landgrave also reposed an entire confidence in Conrad, and gave this holy man the privilege of disposing of all ecclesiastical benefices in the prince's gift. Elizabeth, with her pious husband's consent, often rose in the night to pray, and consecrated great part of her time to her devotions, insomuch that on Sundays and holidays she never allowed herself much leisure to dress herself. The rest of her time, which was not spent in prayer or reading, she devoted to works of charity, and to spinning or carding wool, in which she would only work very coarse wool for the use of the poor or of the Franciscan friars. The mysteries of the life and sufferings of our Saviour were the subject of her most tender and daily meditation. Weighing of what importance prayer and mortification or penance are in a spiritual life, she studied to make her prayer virtually continual by breaking forth into fervent acts of compunction and divine love amidst all her employments. The austerity of her life surpassed that of recluses. When she sat at table, next to the landgrave, to dissemble her abstinence from flesh and savoury dishes, she used to deceive the attention of others by discoursing with the guests or with the prince, carving for others, sending her maids upon errands, often changing her plates, and a thousand other artifices. Her meal frequently consisted only of bread and honey or a dry crust, with a cup of the smallest wine or the like; especially when she dined privately in her chamber with two maids, who voluntarily followed her rules as to diet. She never ate but what came out of her own kitchen, that she might be sure nothing was mixed contrary to the severe rules she had laid down; and this kitchen she kept out of her own private purse, not to be the least charge to her husband. She was a great enemy to rich apparel, though in compliance to the landgrave, she on certain public occasions conformed in some degree to the fashions of the court. When ambassadors came from her father, the King of Hungary, her husband desired her not to appear in that homely apparel which she usually wore; but she prevailed upon him to suffer it; and God was pleased to give so extraordinary a gracefulness to her person, that the ambassadors were exceedingly struck at the comeliness and majesty of the appearance she

made. In the absence of her husband she commonly wore only coarse cloth, not dyed, but in the natural colour of the wool, such as the poor people used. She strongly recommended to her maids of honour simplicity of dress, penance, and assiduous prayer, that several of them were warmed into an imitation of her virtues; but they could only follow her at a distance, for she seemed inimitable in her heroic practices, especially in her profound humility, with which she courted the most mortifying humiliations. In attending the poor and the sick she cheerfully washed and cleansed the most filthy sores, and waited on those that were infected with the most loathsome diseases.

Her alms seemed at all times to have no bounds; in which the good landgrave rejoiced exceedingly, and gave her full liberty. In 1225, Germany being severely visited by a famine, she exhausted the treasury, and distributed her whole crop of corn amongst those who felt the weight of that calamity heaviest. The landgrave was then in Apulia with the emperor; and at his return the officers of his household complained loudly to him of her profusion in favour of the poor. But the prince was so well assured of her piety and prudence, that without examining into the matter, he asked if she alienated his dominions. They answered, "No." "As for her charities," said he, "they will entail upon us the divine blessings: and we shall not want so long as we suffer her to relieve the poor as she does." The castle of Marpurg, the residence of the landgrave, was built on a steep rock, which the infirm and weak were not able to climb. The holy margravine, therefore, built a hospital at the foot of the rock for their reception and entertainment; where she often fed them with her own hands, made their beds, and attended them even in the heat of summer when that place seemed insupportable to all those who were strangers to the sentiments of her generous and indefatigable charity. The helpless children, especially all orphans, were provided for at her expense. Elizabeth was the foundress of another hospital, in which twenty-eight persons were constantly relieved: she fed nine hundred daily at her own gate, besides an incredible number in the different parts of the dominions, so that the revenue in her hands was truly the patrimony of the distressed. But the saint's charity was tempered with discretion; and instead of encouraging in idleness such as were able to work, she employed them in a way suitable to their strength and capacity. Her husband, edified and charmed with her extraordinary piety, not only approved of all she did, but was himself an imitator of her charity, devotion, and other virtues: insomuch that he is deservedly styled by historians the Pious Landgrave. He had by her three children, Herman, Sophia, who was afterwards married to the Duke of Brabant, and Gertrude, who became a nun and died abbess of Aldenburg. Purely upon motives of religion the landgrave took the cross to accompany the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, in the holy war, to Palestine. The separation of this pious and

loving couple was a great trial, though moderated by the heroic spirit of religion with which both were animated. The landgrave joined the emperor in the kingdom of Naples; but as he was going to embark, fell ill of a malignant fever at Otranto, and having received the last sacraments at the hands of the patriarch of Jerusalem, expired in great sentiments of piety on the 11th of September 1227. Many miracles are related to have been wrought by him, in the history of Thuringia, and in that of the crusades.<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth, who at his departure had put on the dress of a widow, upon hearing this melancholy news, wept bitterly and said, "If my husband be dead, I promise to die henceforth to myself, and to the world with all its vanities." God himself was pleased to complete this her sacrifice by a train of other afflictions into which she fell, being a sensible instance of the instability of human things, in which nothing is more constant than an unsteadiness of fortune.

Envy, jealousy, and rancour, all broke loose at once against the virtuous landgravine, which during her husband's life, for the great love and respect which he bore her, had been raked up and covered over as fire under the ashes. As pretences are never wanting to cloak ambition, envy, and other passions which never dare show themselves barefaced, it was alleged, that the saint had squandered away the public revenue upon the poor; that the infant Herman, being unfit for the government of the state, it ought to be given to one who was able to defend and even extend the dominions of the landgraviate; and that therefore Henry, younger brother to the late landgrave, ought to be advanced to the principality. The mob being soothed by the fine speeches of certain powerful factious men, Henry got possession and turned Elizabeth out of the castle, without furniture, provision, or necessaries for the support of nature, and all persons in the town were forbid to let her any lodgings. The princess bore this unjust treatment with a patience far transcending the power of nature, showing nothing in her gestures which was not as composed as if she had been in the greatest tranquillity possible. And rejoicing in her heart to see herself so ill-treated, she went down the castle-hill to the town, placing her whole confidence in God, and with her damsels and maids went into a common inn, or, as others say, a poor woman's cottage, where she remained till midnight, when the bell ringing to matins at the church of the Franciscan friars, she went thither and desired the good fathers to sing a *Te Deum* with solemnity, to give God thanks for his mercies to her in visiting her with afflictions. Though she went about the next day, and used all her endeavours to procure some kind of lodging in the town, no one durst afford her any, for fear of the usurper and his associates. She stayed the whole day in the church of the friars, and at evening had the additional affliction to see her three children, whom their barbarous uncle had sent out of the castle, coming

<sup>1</sup> Hist. des Croisades, lib. x. p. 310, t. ii.

down the hill. She received them in the church porch, with undaunted fortitude, but could not refrain from tenderly weeping to see the innocent babes so insensible of their condition as to smile upon her, rejoicing that they had recovered their mother. Reduced to the lowest ebb, she applied to a priest for relief, who received her into his little house where she had but one straight poor chamber for herself, her maids, and children. Her enemies soon forced her from thence, so that with thanks to those who had given her and hers some kind of shelter from the severities of a very sharp winter season, she returned to the inn or cottage.

The abbess of Kitzingen, in the diocese of Wurtzburg, our saint's aunt, sister to her mother, hearing of her misfortunes, invited her to her monastery, and being extremely moved at the sight of her desolate condition and poverty, advised her to repair to her uncle, the Bishop of Bamberg, a man of great power, charity, and prudence. The bishop received her with many tears, which compassion drew from his eyes, and from those of all the clergy that were with him; and provided for her a commodious house near his palace. His first views were, as she was young and beautiful, to endeavour to look out for a suitable party that, marrying some powerful prince, she might strengthen her interest, and that of her family, by a new alliance, which might enable her to recover her right; but such projects she entirely put a stop to, declaring it was her fixed resolution to devote herself to the divine service in a state of perpetual chastity. In the meantime the body of her late husband, which had been buried at Otranto, was taken up and the flesh being entirely consumed, the bones were put into a rich chest and carried into Germany. The hearse was attended by a great many princes and dukes, and by counts, barons, and knights without number, marching in martial order, with ensigns folded up, the mournful sound of drums, all covered with black, and other warlike instruments in like manner. Where some of these princes left the corpse to return home, the nobility of each country through which it passed took their place; and every night it was lodged in some church or monastery, where masses and dirges were said and gifts offered. When the funeral pomp approached Bamberg, the bishop went out with the clergy and monks in procession to meet it, having left the nobility and knights with the disconsolate pious margravine. At the sight of the hearse her grief was inexpressible; yet, whilst there was not a dry eye in the church, she showed by restraining her sorrow how great a command she had of her passions. Yet, when the chest was opened, her tears burst forth against her will. But, recollecting herself in God, she gave thanks to his Divine Majesty for having so disposed of her honoured husband, as to take him into his eternal tabernacles, so seasonably for himself, though to her severe trial. The corpse remained several days at Bamberg, during which the funeral rites were continued with the utmost solemnity, and it was then conducted with great state into Thuringia.

The princess entreated the barons and knights that attended it to use their interest with her brother-in-law to do her justice, not blaming him for the treatment she had received, but imputing it to evil counsellors. Fired with indignation at the indignities she had received, they engaged to neglect no means of restoring her to her right; so that it was necessary for her to moderate their resentment and to beg they would only use humble remonstrances. This they did, reproaching Henry for having brought so foul a blot and dishonour upon his house, and having violated all laws, divine, civil, and natural, and broke the strongest ties of humanity. They conjured him by God, who beholds all things, and asked him what point in a weak woman, full of peace and piety, could offend him; and what innocent princely babes, who were his own blood, could have done, the tenderness of whose years made them very unfit to suffer such injuries. Ambition strangely steels the heart to all sentiments of justice, charity or humanity. Yet these remonstrances, made by the chief barons of the principality, softened the heart of Henry, and he promised them to restore to Elizabeth her dower and all the rights of her widowhood, and even to put the government of the dominions into her hands. This last she voluntarily chose to renounce, provided it was reserved for her son. Hereupon she was conducted back to the castle out of which she had been expelled, and from that time Henry began to treat her as princess, and obsequiously executed whatever she intimated to be her pleasure. Yet her persecutions were often renewed till her death.

The devout priest Conrad had attended her in great part of her travels, and returned to Marpurg, which was his usual residence. Elizabeth, loathing the grandeur and dreading the distractions of the world, with his advice, bound herself by a vow which she made in his presence, in the church of the Franciscans, to observe the third rule of St Francis, and secretly put on a little habit under her clothes. Her confessor relates that, laying her hands on the altar in the church of the friars minors, she by vow renounced the pomps of the world; she was going to add the vow of poverty, but he stopped her, saying she was obliged, in order to discharge many obligations of her late husband, and what she owed to the poor, to keep in her own hands the disposal of her revenues. Her dower she converted to the use of the poor; and as her director, Conrad, in whom she reposed an entire confidence, was obliged to live in the town of Marpurg, when she quitted her palace she made that, which was on the boundary of her husband's dominions, her place of residence, living first in a little cottage near the town, whilst a house was building for her, in which she spent the last three years of her life in the most fervent practices of devotion, charity, and penance. In her speech she was so reserved and modest, that if she affirmed or denied anything, her words seemed to imply a fear of some mistake. Conrad, having observed that

her attachment to her two principal maids, Isentruude and Guta, seemed too strong, and an impediment to her spiritual progress, proposed to her to dismiss them; and, without making any reply, she instantly obeyed him, though the sacrifice cost mutual tears. The saint, by spinning coarse wool, earned her own maintenance, and, with her maids, dressed her own victuals, which were chiefly herbs, bread, and water. Whilst her hands were busy, in her heart she conversed with God. The King of Hungary, her father, earnestly invited her to his court; but she preferred a state of humiliation and suffering. She chose by preference to do every kind of service in attending the most loathsome lepers among the poor. Spiritual and corporal works of mercy occupied her even to her last moments, and by her moving exhortations many obstinate sinners were converted to God. It seemed, indeed, impossible for anything to resist the eminent spirit of prayer with which she was endowed. In prayer she found her comfort and her strength in her mortal pilgrimage, and was favoured in it with frequent raptures and heavenly communications. Her confessor Conrad, assures us, that when she returned from secret prayer, her countenance often seemed to dart forth rays of light from the divine conversation. Being forewarned by God of her approaching passage to eternity, which she mentioned to her confessor four days before she fell ill, as he assures us, she redoubled her fervour, by her last will made Christ her heir in his poor, made a general confession of her whole life on the twelfth day, survived yet four days, received the last sacraments and, to her last breath, ceased not to pray, or to discourse in the most pathetic manner on the mysteries of the sacred life and sufferings of our Redeemer, and on his coming to judge us. The day of her happy death was the 19th of November, in 1231, in the twenty-fourth year of her age. Her venerable body was deposited in a chapel near the hospital which she had founded. Many sick persons were restored to health at her tomb; an account of which miracles Siffrid, Archbishop of Mentz, sent to Rome, having first caused them to be authenticated by a juridical examination before himself and others. Pope Gregory IX, after a long and mature discussion, performed the ceremony of her canonization on Whit-Sunday, in 1235, four years after her death. Siffrid, upon news hereof, appointed a day for the translation of her relics, which he performed at Marpurg in 1236. The Emperor Frederic II would be present, took up the first stone of the saint's grave, and gave and placed on the shrine with his own hands a rich crown of gold. St Elizabeth's son Herman, then landgrave, and his two sisters, Sophia and Gertrude, assisted at this august ceremony; also the archbishops of Cologne and Bremen, and an incredible number of other princes, prelates, and people, so that the number is said to have amounted to above two hundred thousand persons. The relics were enshrined in a rich vermillion case, and placed upon the altar in the church of the hospital. A Cistercian monk affirmed

upon oath, that a little before this translation, praying at the tomb of the saint, he was cured of a palpitation of the heart and grievous melancholy, with which he had been grievously troubled for forty years, and had in vain sought remedies from physicians and every other means. Many instances are mentioned by Montanus, and by the Archbishop of Mentz, and the confessor Conrad, of persons afflicted with palsies, and other inveterate diseases, who recovered their health at her tomb, or by invoking her intercession; as, of a boy blind from his birth, by the mother's invocation of St Elizabeth at her sepulchre, applying some of the dust to his eyes, upon which a skin which covered each eye burst, and he saw, as several witnesses declared upon oath, and Master Conrad saw the eyes thus healed; of a boy three years old, dead, cold, and stiff a whole night, raised to life the next morning by a pious grandmother praying to God through the intercession of St Elizabeth; with a vow of an alms to her hospital, and of dedicating the child to the divine service; attested in every circumstance by the depositions of the mother, father, grandmother, uncle, and others, recorded by Conrad; of a boy dead and stiff for many hours, just going to be carried to burial, raised by the invocation of St Elizabeth; of a youth drowned, restored to life by the like prayer; of a boy drawn out of a well, dead, black, &c., and a child still-born, brought to life; others cured of palsies, falling-sickness, fevers, madness, lameness, blindness, the bloody flux, &c., in the authentic relation. A portion of her relics is kept in the Church of the Carmelites, at Brussels; another in the magnificent Chapel of La Roche-Guyon, upon the Seine, and a considerable part in a precious shrine is in the electoral treasury of Hanover.<sup>1</sup> Some persons of the third Order of St Francis having raised that institute into a religious Order long after the death of our saint (without prejudice to the secular state of this Order, which is still embraced by many who live in the world), the religious women of this Order chose her for their patroness, and are sometimes called the nuns of St Elizabeth.

Perfection consists not essentially in mortification, but in charity; and he is most perfect who is most united to God by love. But humility and self-denial remove the impediments to this love, by retrenching the inordinate appetites and evil inclinations which wed the heart to creatures. The affections must be untied by mortification, and the heart set at liberty by an entire disengagement from the slavery of the senses, and all irregular affections. A stone cannot fall down to its centre so long as the lets which hold it up are not taken away. So neither can a soul attain to the pure love of God, whilst the strings of earthly attachments hold her down. Hence the maxims of the gospel, and the example of the saints, strongly inculcate the necessity of dying to ourselves by humility, meekness, patience,

<sup>1</sup> See *Thesaurus Reliquiarum Electoris Brunswico Luneburgensis.* Hanoviae, 1718.

self-denial, and obedience. Nor does anything so much advance this interior crucifixion of the old man as the patient suffering of afflictions.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 19:*

ST BALAAM, martyr, a humble countryman, who was scourged, racked and tormented, but preserved a meek and composed countenance, confessing Christ to the end: ST ELIZABETH, widow of the Landgrave of Thuringia, who became a humble tertiary of St Francis and lived in poverty and humiliation. She died in 1231: ST PONTIAN, Pope and martyr, who sat in Peter's chair five years from the death of St Urban, was banished into Sardinia and died in exile there.

## NOVEMBER 20

### ST EDMUND, KING AND MARTYR (A.D. 870)

[From his life, written in 985, from the relation of St Dunstan, by Abbo of Fleury, who lived then a monk at Canterbury, but died Abbot of Fleury, in France. To this work, published by Surius, is subjoined another, containing a history of miracles wrought by this saint's intercession, probably by another hand, as the authors of the *Hist. Littér. de la France* observe, t. vii. p. 175. A MS. copy of this book, in Jesus' College, is called *Liber Feretraliorum*, *i.e.* the book of the treasurers, or keepers of the relics. See also St Edmund's life in verse, compiled by John Lydgate, the most learned professor, celebrated poet, and monk of St Edmundsbury, who dedicated this book to Henry VI. See also Lydgate's account of the miracles of St Edmund, and prayers to him, manuscripts in several libraries, as (with other manuscripts relating to this saint) in the Norfolk Library, belonging to the Royal Society. See on his virtues, *Asserius. Annales Britan.* (inter *Script. Angl. per Gale*), pp. 159-161. Hearne, Pref. to *Langtoft's Chronicle*, p. 66, and *St Edmundi regis vitâ per Osbertum de Clare, Westmonasterii Priorem* in the Cottonian library in the British Museum, MSS., *Vespasianus*, A. viii. 4; also *St Edmundi regis vitâ*, in the king's library, ib. 8, c. vi. 20; *Leland Collect.*, vol. i. p. 245.]

THOUGH from the time of King Egbert, in 802, the Kings of the West-Saxons were monarchs of all England, yet several kings reigned in certain parts after that time, in some measure subordinate to them. One Offa was King of the East-Angles, who, being desirous to end his days in penance and devotion to Rome, resigned his crown to St Edmund, at that time only fifteen years of age, but a most virtuous prince, and descended from the old English-Saxon kings of this isle. The saint was placed on the throne of his ancestors, as Lydgate, Abbo, and others express themselves, and was crowned by Humbert, Bishop of Elman, on Christmas-day, in 855, at Burum, a royal villa on the Stour, now called Bures, or Buers. Though very young, he was by his piety, goodness, humility, and all other virtues, the model of good princes. He was a declared enemy of flatterers and informers, and would see with his own eyes and hear with his own ears, to avoid being surprised into a wrong judgment, or imposed upon by the passions or ill designs of others. The peace and happiness of his people were his whole concern, which he endeavoured to establish by an impartial administration of justice and religious regulations in his dominions. He was the father of his subjects, particularly of the poor, the protector of widows and orphans, and the support of the weak. Religion and piety were the most distinguishing part of his character. Monks and devout persons used to know the psalter without book, that they might recite the

psalms at work, in travelling, and on every other occasion. To get it by heart St Edmund lived in retirement a whole year in his royal tower at Hunstanton (which he had built for a country solitude), which place is now a village in Norfolk. The book which the saint used for that purpose was religiously kept at St Edmundsbury till the dissolution of abbeys.

The holy king had reigned fifteen years when the Danes infested his dominions. Hinguar and Hubba, two brothers, the most barbarous of all the Danish plunderers landing in England, wintered among the East-Angles; then, having made a truce with that nation, they in summer sailed to the north, and landing at the mouth of the Tweed, plundered with fire and sword Northumberland, and afterwards Mercia, directing their march through Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and Cambridgeshire. Out of a lust of rage and cruelty, and the most implacable aversion to the Christian name, they everywhere destroyed the churches and monasteries; and, as it were in barbarous sport, massacred all priests and religious persons whom they met with. In the great monastery of Coldingham, beyond Berwick, the nuns, fearing not death but insults which might be offered to their chastity, at the instigation of St Ebba, the holy abbess, cut off their noses and upper lips, that appearing to the barbarians frightful spectacles of horror, they might preserve their virtue from danger; the infidels accordingly were disconcerted at such a sight, and spared their virtue, but put them all to the sword. In their march, amongst other monasteries, those of Bardney, Crowland, Peterborough, Ely, and Huntingdon were levelled with the ground, and the religious inhabitants murdered. In the Cathedral of Peterborough is shown a monument (removed thither from a place without the building) called Monks'-Stone, on which are the effigies of an abbot and several monks. It stood over the pit in which fourscore monks of this house were interred, whom Hinguar and Hubba massacred in 870. The barbarians, reeking with blood, poured down upon St Edmund's dominions, burning Thetford, the first town they met with, and laying waste all before them. The people, relying upon the faith of treaties, thought themselves secure, and were unprepared. However, the good king raised what forces he could, met the infidels, or at least a part of their army near Thetford, and discomfited them. But seeing them soon after reinforced with fresh numbers, against which his small body was not able to make any stand, and being unwilling to sacrifice the lives of his soldiers in vain, and grieving for the eternal loss of the souls of his enemies, who would be slain in a fruitless engagement, he disbanded his troops and retired himself towards his castle of Framlingham, in Suffolk. The barbarian had sent him proposals which were inconsistent both with religion and with the justice which he owed to his people. These the saint rejected, being resolved rather to die a victim of his faith and duty to God, than to do anything against his conscience and religion. In his flight he was over-

taken and surrounded by infidels at Oxon, upon the Waveney: he concealed himself for some short time, but, being discovered, was bound with heavy chains and conducted to the general's tent. Terms were again offered him equally prejudicial to religion and to his people, which the holy king refused to confirm, declaring that religion was dearer to him than his life, which he would never purchase by offending God. Hinguar, exasperated at this answer, in his barbarous rage caused him to be cruelly beaten with cudgels, then to be tied to a tree and torn a long time together with whips. All this he bore with invincible meekness and patience, never ceasing to call upon the name of Jesus. The infidels were the more exasperated, and as he stood bound to the tree, they made him a mark wantonly to shoot at, till his body was covered with arrows like a porcupine. Hinguar at length, in order to put an end to the butchery, commanded his head to be struck off. Thus the saint finished his martyrdom on the 20th of November, in 870, the fifteenth of his reign, and twenty-ninth of his age; the circumstances of which St Dunstan learned from one who was armour-bearer to the saint and an eye-witness. The place was then called Hengles-dun, now Hoxon, or Hoxne; a priory of monks was afterwards built there which bore the name of the martyr.

The saint's head was carried by the infidels into a wood and thrown into a brake of bushes; but miraculously found by a pillar of light and deposited with the body at Hoxdon. These sacred remains were very soon after conveyed to Bedricsworth, or Kingston, since called St Edmundsbury, because this place was St Edmund's own town and private patrimony; not on account of his burial, for *Bury* in the English-Saxon language signified a court or palace. A church of timber was erected over the place where he was interred, which was thus built according to the fashion of those times. Trunks of large trees were sawn lengthways in the middle and reared up with one end fixed in the ground, with the bark or rough side outermost. These trunks being made of an equal height and set up close to one another, and the interstices filled up with mud or mortar, formed the four walls, upon which was raised a thatched roof. Nor can we be surprised at the homeliness of this structure, since the same was the fabric of the royal rich abbey of Glastonbury, the work of the most munificent and powerful West-Saxon kings, till in latter ages it was built in a stately manner of stone. The precious remains of St Edmund were honoured with many miracles. In 920, for fear of the barbarians under Turkil the Dane, in the reign of King Ethelred, they were conveyed to London by Alfun, bishop of that city, and the monk Egelwin, or Ailwin, the keeper of this sacred treasure, who never abandoned it. After remaining three years in the Church of St Gregory, in London, it was translated again with honour to St Edmundsbury in 923. The great church of timber-work stood till King Knute, or Canutus, to make reparation for the injuries

his father Swein, or Sweno, had done to this place and to the relics of the martyr, built and founded there, in 1020, a new most magnificent church and abbey in honour of this holy martyr. The unparalleled piety, humility, meekness, and other virtues of St Edmund are admirably set forth by our historians. This incomparable prince and holy martyr was considered by succeeding English kings as their special patron, and as an accomplished model of all royal virtues. The feast of St Edmund is reckoned among the holidays of precept in this kingdom by the national council of Oxford in 1222; but is omitted in the constitutions of Archbishop Simon Islip, who retrenched certain holidays in 1362.

No Christian can be surprised that innocence should suffer. Prosperity is often the most grievous judgment that God exercises upon a wicked man, who by it is suffered, in punishment of his impiety, to blind and harden himself in his evil courses, and to plunge himself deeper in iniquity. On the other hand God, in his merciful providence, conducts second causes so that afflictions fall to the share of those souls whose sanctification he has particularly in view. By tribulation a man learns perfectly to die to the world and himself, a work which, without its aid, even the severest self-denial and the most perfect obedience, leave imperfect. By tribulation we learn the perfect exercise of humility, patience, meekness, resignation, and pure love of God; which are neither practised nor learned without such occasions. By a good use of tribulation a person becomes a saint in a very short time, and at a cheap rate. The opportunity and grace of suffering well is a mercy in favour of chosen souls; and a mercy to which every saint, from Abel to the last of the elect, is indebted for his crown. We meet with sufferings from ourselves, from disappointments, from friends, and from enemies. We are on every side beset with crosses. But we bear them with impatience and complaints. Thus we cherish our passions, and multiply sins by the very means which are given us to crucify and overcome them. To learn to bear crosses well is one of the most essential and most important duties of a Christian life. To make a good use of the little crosses which we continually meet with is the means of making the greatest progress in all virtue, and of obtaining strength to stand our ground under great trials. St Edmund's whole life was a preparation for martyrdom.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 20:*

ST BERNWARD, Bishop of Hildesheim, chaplain to Otho III, King of Germany. He spent the greater part of the night in prayer. ST EDMUND, King, martyred by Danes in 870: ST FELIX of Valois, renounced a considerable estate and retired to a great wood, resolved to live only for God: ST HUMBERT, Bishop of the East-Angles, martyr: and ST MAXENTIA of Ireland, virgin, martyr, said to have been of royal extraction. Her festival is mentioned in the Breviaries of Aberdeen and Beauvais.

NOVEMBER 21

## THE PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

RELIGIOUS parents never fail by devout prayer to consecrate their children to the divine service and love, both before and after their birth. Some amongst the Jews, not content with this general consecration of their children, offered them to God in their infancy, by the hands of the priests in the temple, to be lodged in apartments belonging to the temple, and brought up in attending the priests and levites in the sacred ministry. It is an ancient tradition, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was thus solemnly offered to God in the temple in her infancy.<sup>1</sup> This festival of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, or, as it is often called by the Greeks, the entrance of the Blessed Virgin into the Temple, is mentioned in the most ancient Greek Menologies extant.

By the consecration which the Blessed Virgin made of herself to God in the first use which she made of her reason, we are admonished of the most important and strict obligation which all persons lie under, of an early dedication of themselves to the divine love and service. It is agreed amongst all masters of Christian morality, that everyone is bound in the first moral instant of the use of reason to convert his heart to God by love; and if divine faith be then duly proposed to him (which is the case of Christian children) by a supernatural assent to it, he is bound then to make an act of faith; also an act of hope in God as a supernatural rewarder and helper, and an act of divine charity. Who can be secure that in the very moment in which he entered into his moral life and was capable of living to God, did not stain his innocence by a capital omission of this duty? How diligent and solicitous are parents bound to be in instructing their children in the first fundamental mysteries of faith, and in the duty of prayer, and in impressing upon their tender minds a sense of spiritual things in a manner in which their age may be capable of receiving it. These first fruits of the heart are a sacrifice of which God is infinitely jealous, an emblem of which were all the sacrifices of first fruits prescribed in the old law, in token that he is our beginning and last end. Such a heart, adorned with the baptismal grace of innocence, has particular charms. Grace recovered by penance is not like that of innocence which has never been defiled; nor is it the same happiness for a soul to return to God from the slavery of sin, as for one to give him her first affections, and to open her understanding and will to his love before the world has found any entrance there. The tender soul of Mary was then adorned with the most precious graces, an object of astonishment and praise to the angels, and of the highest complacence to the adorable Trinity, the Father looking

<sup>1</sup> See St Greg. of Nyssa, Serm. in Nat. Christ., p. 779.

upon her as his beloved daughter, the Son, as one chosen and prepared to become his mother, and the Holy Ghost as his darling spouse.

Her first presentation to God, made by the hands of her parents and by her own devotion, was then an offering most acceptable in his sight. Let our consecration of ourselves to God be made under her patronage, and assisted by her powerful intercession and the union of her merits. If we have reason to fear that we criminally neglected this duty at the first dawning of our reason, or, if we have since been unfaithful to our sacred baptismal engagements, such is the mercy and goodness of our gracious God, that he despairs not our late offerings. But that these may be accepted by him, we must first prepare the present he requires of us, that is, our hearts. They must be washed and cleansed in the sacred laver of Christ's adorable blood, by means of sincere compunction and penance; and all inordinate affections must be pared away by our perfectly renouncing in spirit, honours, riches, and pleasures, and being perfectly disengaged from creatures, and ready to do and suffer all for God, that we may be entirely his, and that neither the world nor pride, nor any irregular passion may have any place in us. What secret affections to this or that creature lurk in our souls, which hinder us from being altogether his, unless they are perfectly cut off or reformed! This Mary did by spending her youth in holy retirement, at a distance from the commerce and corruption of the world, and by the most assiduous application to all the duties and exercises of a religious and interior life. Mary was the first who set up the standard of virginity; and, by consecrating it by a perpetual vow to our Lord, she opened the way to all virgins who have since followed her example. They, in particular, ought to take her for their special patroness, and, as her life was the most perfect model of their state, they ought always to have her example before their eyes, and imitate her in prayer, humility, modesty, silence, and retirement.

Mary lived retired until she was introduced into the world and espoused to St Joseph. Some think her espousals were at first only a promise or betrothing: but the ends assigned by the fathers, seem rather to show them to have been a marriage. These are summed up by St Jerom as follows:<sup>1</sup> that by the pedigree of Joseph, the descent of Mary from the tribe of Juda, might be demonstrated; that she might not be stoned by the Jews as an adulteress; that, fleeing into Egypt, she might have the comfort and protection of a spouse. A fourth reason, says St Jerom, is added by the martyr Ignatius: that the birth of the Son of God might be concealed from the devil. The words of that apostolic father are: "Three mysteries wrought by God in silence were concealed from the prince of this world: the virginity of Mary, the bringing forth of her Son, and the death of the Lord."<sup>2</sup> Not that God could fear any impediment to his

<sup>1</sup> In c. 1, Mat. p. 7, ed. Ben.

<sup>2</sup> St Ignat. ep. ad Ephes. p. 16.

designs from the devil; but he was pleased to effect these mysteries in silence and without worldly show and noise, that pride and hell might, by his all-wise and sweet providence, be more meetly triumphed over, whilst the devil himself hastened his own overthrow by concurring to the mystery of the cross. From the marriage of the Blessed Virgin and St Joseph, St Austin shows<sup>1</sup> that marriage requires no more than the mutual consent of the will between parties who lie under no impediment or inability to an indissoluble individual society of life. In this holy marriage we admire the incomparable chastity of Mary and Joseph; and the sanctity and honour, as well as the patronage and example, which that holy state receives from this mystery. In certain particular churches the espousals of the Virgin Mary and St Joseph are honoured with an office on the 23rd of January.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 21:*

THE PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY: a feast dating back to the fourteenth century: ST COLUMBAN of Ireland, Abbot, a native of Leinster, born about the middle of the sixth century. He composed a commentary on the Psalms: ST GELASIUS, Pope, of an African family, who governed the Church for nearly five years. A very learned man, skilled in the customs and usages of the Church and eminent for humility, temperance, liberality to the poor and for the purity of his manners.

## NOVEMBER 22

### ST CECILY, VIRGIN, MARTYR, PATRONESS OF CHURCH MUSIC (A.D. 230)

THE name of St Cecily has always been most illustrious in the church, and ever since the primitive ages is mentioned with distinction in the canon of the mass, and in the sacramentaries and calendars of the church. Her spouse Valerian, Tiburtius, and Maximus, an officer, who were her companions in martyrdom, are also mentioned in the same authentic and venerable writings. St Cecily was a native of Rome, of a good family, and educated in the principles and perfect practice of the Christian religion. In her youth she by vow consecrated her virginity to God, yet was compelled by her parents to marry a nobleman named Valerian. Him she converted to the faith, and soon after gained to the same his brother Tiburtius. The men first suffered martyrdom, being beheaded for the faith. St Cecily finished her glorious triumph some days after them. Their acts, which are of very small authority, make them contemporary with Pope Urban I, and consequently place their martyrdom about the year 230, under Alexander Severus; others, however, place the triumph of these martyrs under Marcus Aurelius, between the years 176 and 180. Their sacred bodies were deposited in part of the cemetery of Calixtus, which part, from our saint, was called St Cecily's cemetery. Mention is

<sup>1</sup> St Aug. lib. de Nuptiis et Concup. c. 11. n. 13, p. 287.

made of an ancient Church of St Cecily in Rome in the fifth century, in which Pope Symmachus held a council in the year 500. This church being fallen to decay, Pope Paschal I began to rebuild it; but was in some pain how he should find the body of the saint, for it was thought that the Lombards had taken it away, as they had many others from the cemeteries of Rome, when they besieged that city under King Astulphus in 755. One Sunday, as this pope was assisting at matins as was his wont, at St Peter's, he fell into a slumber, in which he was advertised by St Cecily herself that the Lombards had in vain sought for her body, and that he should find it; and he accordingly discovered it in the cemetery called by her name, clothed in a robe of gold tissue, with linen cloths at her feet, dipped in her blood. With her body was found that of Valerian, her husband; and the pope caused them to be translated to her church in the city; as also the bodies of Tiburtius and Maximus, martyrs, and of the popes Urban and Lucius, which lay in the adjoining cemetery of *Prætextatus*, on the same Appian road.<sup>1</sup> This translation was made in 821. Pope Paschal founded a monastery in honour of these saints, near the Church of St Cecily, that the monks might perform the office day and night. He adorned that church with great magnificence, and gave to it silver plate to the amount of about nine hundred pounds—among other things a ciborium, or tabernacle, of five hundred pounds weight; and a great many pieces of rich stuffs for veils and such kinds of ornaments; in one of which was represented the angel crowning St Cecily, Valerian, and Tiburtius. This church, which gives title to a cardinal priest, was sumptuously rebuilt in 1599 by Cardinal Paul Emilius Sfondrati, nephew to Pope Gregory XIV, when Clement VIII caused the bodies of these saints to be removed under the high altar, and deposited in a most sumptuous vault in the same church called the Confession of St Cecily; it was enriched in such a manner by Cardinal Paul Emilius Sfondrati as to dazzle the eye and astonish the spectator. This church of St Cecily is called In Trastevere, or Beyond the Tiber, to distinguish it from two other churches in Rome which bear the name of this saint.

St Cecily, from her assiduity in singing the divine praises (in which, according to her Acts, she often joined instrumental music with vocal), is regarded as patroness of church music. The psalms, and many sacred canticles in many other parts of the holy scripture, and the universal practice both of the ancient Jewish and of the Christian church, recommend the religious custom of sometimes employing a decent and grave music in sounding forth the divine praises. By this homage of praise we join the heavenly spirits in their uninterrupted songs of adoration, love, and praise. And by such music we express the spiritual joy of our hearts in this heavenly function, and excite ourselves therein to holy jubilation and devotion.

<sup>1</sup> Anastasius in Paschali I ap. Murat. t. iii. pp. 215, 216.

Divine love and praise are the work of the heart, without which all words or exterior signs are hypocrisy and mockery. Yet as we are bound to consecrate to God our voices and all our organs and faculties, and all creatures which we use, so we ought to employ them all in magnifying his sanctity, greatness, and glory, and sometimes to accompany our interior affections of devotion with the most expressive exterior signs. St Chrysostom elegantly extols the good effects of sacred music, and shows how strongly the fire of divine love is kindled in the soul by devout psalmody. St Austin teaches that "it is useful in moving piously the mind and kindling the affections of divine love." St Charles Borromeo in his youth allowed himself no other amusement but that of grave music, with a view to that of the church. As to music as an amusement, too much time must never be given to it; and extreme care ought to be taken, as a judicious and experienced tutor observes, that children be not set to learn it very young, because it is a thing which bewitches the senses, dissipates the mind exceedingly, and alienates it from serious studies, as daily experience shows. Soft and effeminate music is to be always shunned with abhorrence, as the corrupter of the heart and the poison of virtue.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 22 :*

ST CECILY, virgin, of Rome (230), regarded as the patroness of Church music. Her name has ever been illustrious in the Church: ST PHILEMON and ST APPIA, honoured by both the Latins and the Greeks: ST THEODORUS THE STUDITE, Abbot, eminent for his virtues. He succeeded his uncle, St Plato. He was scourged by order of the young emperor Constantine, whom he had rebuked for putting away his lawful wife (795). He opposed the Iconoclasts.

### NOVEMBER 23

#### ST CLEMENT, POPE, MARTYR

(A.D. 100)

[See Tillemont, t. ii. p. 162; Cellier, Wake, Pagi ad an. 100, n. 2. Schelstrate, Ant. Illustr. Diss. 3, c. 2, p. 340. Adnotatores in Anast. Bibl. t. ii. p. 55, ed. an. 1723. Orsi, t. i. lib. ii.]

ST CLEMENT, the son of Faustinus, a Roman by birth, was of Jewish extraction; for he tells us himself that he was of the race of Jacob. He was converted to the faith by St Peter or St Paul, and was so constant in his attendance on these apostles, and so active in assisting them in their ministry, that St Jerom and other fathers call him an apostolic man; St Clement of Alexandria styles him an apostle; and Rufinus, almost an apostle. Some authors attribute his conversion to St Peter, whom he met at Cæsarea with St Barnabas; but he attended St Paul at Philippi in 62, and shared in his sufferings there. We are assured by St Chrysostom that he was a companion of the latter, with SS. Luke and Timothy, in many of his apostolic journeys, labours, and dangers. St Paul (Phil. iv. 3) calls him his fellow-labourer, and ranks him among those whose names are

written in the book of life; a privilege and matter of joy far beyond the power of commanding devils. (Luke x. 17.) St Clement followed St Paul to Rome, where he also heard St Peter preach, and was instructed in his school, as St Irenaeus and Pope Zosimus testify. Tertullian tells us that St Peter ordained him bishop, by which some understand that he made him a bishop of nations, to preach the gospel in many countries; others, with Epiphanius, that he made him his vicar at Rome, with an episcopal character to govern that church during his absence in his frequent missions. Others suppose he might at first be made bishop of the Jewish church in that city. After the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul, St Linus was appointed Bishop of Rome, and after eleven years, succeeded by St Cletus. Upon his demise in 89, or rather in 91, St Clement was placed in the apostolic chair. According to the Liberian Calendar he sat nine years, eleven months, and twenty days.

At Corinth, an impious and detestable division, as our saint called it, happened amongst the faithful, like that which St Paul had appeased in the same church; and a party rebelled against holy and irreproachable priests and presumed to depose them. It seems to have been soon after the death of Domitian in 96, that St Clement, in the name of the church of Rome, wrote to them his excellent epistle, a piece highly extolled and esteemed in the primitive church as an admirable work, as Eusebius calls it. It was placed in rank next to the canonical books of the holy scriptures, and with them read in the churches. Whence it was found in the very ancient Alexandrian manuscript copy of the Bible, which Cyril Lucaris sent to our King James I, from which Patrick Young, the learned keeper of that king's library, published it at Oxford in 1633. St Clement begins his letter by conciliating the benevolence of those who were at variance, tenderly putting them in mind how edifying their behaviour was when they were all humble-minded, not boasting of anything, desiring rather to be subject than to govern, to give than to receive, content with the portion God had dispensed to them, listening diligently to his word, having an insatiable desire of doing good, and a plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost upon all of them. At that time they were sincere, without offence, not mindful of injuries, and all sedition and schism was an abomination to them. The saint laments that they had then forsaken the fear of the Lord, and were fallen into pride, envy, strife, and sedition; and pathetically exhorts them to lay aside all pride and anger, for Christ is theirs who are humble and not theirs who exalt themselves. The sceptre of the majesty of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, came not in the show of pride, though he could have done so; but with humility. He bids them look up to the Creator of the world, and think how gentle and patient he is towards his whole creation; also with what peace it all obeys his will, and the heavens, earth, impassable ocean, and worlds beyond it, are governed by the com-

mands of this great master. Considering how near God is to us, and that none of our thoughts are hid from him, how ought we never to do anything contrary to his will, and honour them who are set over us! showing with a sincere affection of meekness, and manifesting the government of our tongues by a love of silence. "Let your children," says the saint, "be bred up in the instruction of the Lord, and learn how great a power humility has with God, how much a pure and holy charity avails with him, and how excellent and great his fear is."

It appears by what follows, that some at Corinth boggled at the belief of a resurrection of the flesh, which the saint beautifully shows to be easy to the Almighty power, and illustrates by the vine which sheds its leaves, then buds, spreads its leaves, flowers, and afterwards produces first sour grapes, then ripe fruit; by the morning rising from night; and corn brought forth from seed. The saint adds a strong exhortation to shake off all sluggishness and laziness, for it is only the good workman who receives the bread of his labour. "We must hasten," says he, "with all earnestness and readiness of mind, to perfect every good work, labouring with cheerfulness; for even the Creator and Lord of all things rejoices in his own works." The latter part of this epistle is a pathetic recommendation of humility, peace, and charity. "Let every one," says the saint, "be subject to another, according to the order in which he is placed by the gift of God. Let not the strong man neglect the care of the weak; let the weak see that he reverence the strong. Let the rich man distribute to the necessity of the poor, and let the poor bless God who giveth him one to supply his want. Let the wise man show forth his wisdom, not in words, but in good works. Let him that is humble, never speak of himself, or make show of his actions. Let him that is pure in the flesh, not grow proud of it, knowing that it was another who gave him the gift of continence. They who are great cannot yet subsist without those that are little; nor the little without the great. In our body, the head without the feet is nothing; neither the feet without the head. And the smallest members of our body are yet both necessary and useful to the whole." Thus the saint teaches that the lowest in the church may be the greatest before God, if they are most faithful in the discharge of their respective duties. St Clement puts pastors and superiors in mind that, with trembling and humility, they should have nothing but the fear of God in view, and take no pleasure in their own power and authority. "Let us," says he, "pray for all such as fall into any trouble or distress; that being endued with humility and moderation, they may submit, not to us, but to the will of God." Fortunatus, who is mentioned by St Paul, was come from the church of Corinth to Rome, to inform that holy see of their unhappy schism. St Clement says, he had dispatched four messengers to Corinth with him, and adds, "Send them back to us again with all speed in peace and joy, that they may the

sooner acquaint us with your peace and concord, so much prayed for and desired by us; and that we may rejoice in your good order."

We have a large fragment of a second epistle of St Clement to the Corinthians, found in the same Alexandrian manuscript of the Bible; from which circumstance it appears to have been also read like the former in many churches, which St Dionysius of Corinth expressly testifies of that church, though it was not so celebrated among the ancients as the other. In it our saint exhorts the faithful to despise this world and its false enjoyments, and to have those which are promised us always before our eyes; to pursue virtue with all our strength, and its peace will follow us with the inexpressible delights of the promise of what is to come. The necessity of perfectly subduing both the irascible and concupiscent passions of our souls, he lays down as the foundation of a Christian life, in words which St Clement of Alexandria enforces and illustrates. Besides these letters of St Clement to the Corinthians, two others have been lately discovered, which are addressed to spiritual eunuchs or virgins. Of these St Jerom speaks, when he says of certain epistles of St Clement, " In the epistles which Clement, the successor of the Apostle Peter, wrote to them, that is, to such eunuchs, almost his whole discourse turns upon the excellence of virginity." These two letters were found in a manuscript copy of a Syriac New Testament, by John James Westein, in 1752, and printed by him with a Latin translation at Amsterdam in 1752, and again in 1757. A French translation of them has been published, with short critical notes. These letters are not unworthy this great disciple of St Peter; and in them the counsels of St Paul concerning celibacy and virginity are explained, that state is pathetically recommended, without prejudice to the honour due to the holy state of marriage; and the necessity of shunning all familiarity with persons of a different sex, and the like occasions of incontinence is set in a true light.

St Clement with patience and prudence got through the persecution of Domitian. Nerva's peaceable reign being very short, the tempest increased under Trajan, who, even from the beginning of his reign, never allowed the Christian assemblies. It was in the year 100 that the third general persecution was raised by him, which was the more afflicting, as this reign was in other respects generally famed for justice and moderation. Rufin, Pope Zosimus, and the council of Bazas in 452, expressly styles St Clement a martyr. In the ancient canon of the Roman mass, he is ranked among the martyrs. Eusebius tells us, that St Clement departed this life in the third year of Trajan, of Christ 100. From this expression some will have it that he died a natural death; but St Clement says of St Paul, who certainly died a martyr, that " he departed out of the world."<sup>1</sup> It is also objected, that St Irenæus gives the title of martyr only to St Telesphorus

<sup>1</sup> Ep. ad Cor. c. v.

among the popes before St Eleutherius. But it is certain that some others were martyrs, whatever was the cause of his omission. St Irenæus mentions the epistle of St Clement yet omits those of St Ignatius, though in some places he quotes him. Shall we hence argue, that St Ignatius wrote none? When the Emperor Lewis Debonnair founded the great abbey of Cava, in Abruzzo, four miles from Slaerno, in 872, he enriched it with the relics of St Clement, pope and martyr, which Pope Adrian sent him, as is related at length in the chronicle of that abbey, with a history of many miracles. These relics remain there to this day. The ancient Church of St Clement in Rome, in which St Gregory the Great preached several of his homilies, still retains part of his relics. It was repaired by Clement XI, but still shows entire the old structure of Christian churches, divided into three parts: the narthex, the ambo, and the sanctuary.

St Clement inculcates,<sup>1</sup> that the spirit of Christianity is a spirit of perfect disengagement from the things of this world. "We must," says he, "look upon all the things of this world, as none of ours, and not desire them. This world and that to come are two enemies. We cannot, therefore, be friends to both; but we must resolve which we would forsake, and which we would enjoy. And we think, that it is better to hate the present things, as little, short-lived, and corruptible; and to love those which are to come, which are truly good and incorruptible. Let us contend with all earnestness, knowing that we are now called to the combat. Let us run in the straight road, the race that is incorruptible. This is what Christ saith: keep your bodies pure and your souls without spot, that ye may receive eternal life."

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 23:*

ST AMPHILOCHIUS, Bishop of Iconium, a friend of St Basil and of St Gregory Nazianzen: ST CLEMENT, Pope and martyr, a Roman by birth, of Jewish extraction, converted to the faith by St Peter or by St Paul—who called him his "fellow-labourer": ST DANIEL, Bishop of Bangor, greatly venerated in the British churches: ST TRON, who illumined Brabant by the light of his virtues. After being ordained he preached to the infidels in his own country.

## NOVEMBER 24

### ST JOHN OF THE CROSS, CONFESSOR (A.D. 1591)

[From his life prefixed to his works: Villefore's life of St Teresa, t. i. pp. 292, 318; t. ii. p. 132. See his life compiled by F. Honoratus of St Mary, the judicious critic of the same Order, in 12mo, and more at large by F. Dositheus of St Alexis, in two vols. 4to, Paris, 1727.]

ST JOHN, by his family name called Yépes, was youngest child of Gonzales of Yépes, and born at Fontibere near Avila, in Old Castile, in 1542. With his mother's milk he sucked in the most tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and was preserved from many dangers by the visible protection of

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 2, ad Cor. n. 5, 6.

her intercession. The death of his father left his mother destitute of all succours with three little children, with whom she settled at Medina. John learned the first elements of letters at a college. The administrator of the hospital, delighted with his extraordinary piety, employed him in serving the sick; an office which was very agreeable to the devotion of the youth, who acquitted himself with the feeling of charity much above his years, especially when he exhorted the sick to acts of virtue. He practised, at the same time, excessive austerities, and continued his studies in the college of the Jesuits. At twenty-one years of age, to satisfy his devotion to the mother of God, he took the religious habit among the Carmelite friars at Medina in 1563. Never did any novice give greater proofs of obedience, humility, fervour, and love of the cross. His zeal, far from abating after his novitiate, was continually upon the increase. When he arrived at Salamanca, in order to commence his higher studies, the austerities which he practised were excessive. He chose for his cell a little dark hole at the bottom of the dormitory. A hollow board, something like a grave, was his bed. He platted himself so rough a hair shirt that, at the least motion, it pricked his body to blood. His fasts and other mortifications were incredible. By these means he studied to die to the world and to himself; but by assiduous prayer and contemplation, in silence and retirement, he gave wings to his soul. It was his desire to be a lay-brother, but this was refused him. He had distinguished himself in his course of theological studies, when in 1567, being twenty-five years old, he was promoted to the priesthood. He prepared himself to offer his first sacrifice by humiliations, fasts, penitential tears, fervent prayers, and long meditations on the sufferings of our Divine Redeemer; deeply imprinting his precious wounds in his heart and sacrificing himself, his will, and all his actions with his Saviour, in raptures of love and devotion. The graces which he received from the holy mysteries, inflamed him with a desire of greater retirement; for which purpose he deliberated with himself to enter the Order of the Carthusians.

St Teresa was then busy in establishing her reformation of the Carmelites, and coming to Medina del Campo heard speak of the extraordinary virtue of brother John. Whereupon she desired to see him, admired his spirit, and told him that God had called him to sanctify himself in the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel: that she had received authority from the general to found two reformed houses of men, and that he himself should be the first instrument of so great a work. Soon after, she founded her first monastery of men in a poor house in the village of Durvelle. John, who had acquiesced in her proposal, entered this new Bethlehem, in a perfect spirit of sacrifice, and about two months after was joined by some others, who all renewed their profession on Advent Sunday, 1568. This was the beginning of the Barefooted Carmelite Friars, whose institute was

approved by Pope Pius V, and in 1580 confirmed by Gregory XIII. So great were the austerities of these primitive Carmelites, that St Teresa saw it necessary to prescribe them a mitigation. The odour of their sanctity in their poor obscure house spread all over Spain; and St Teresa soon after established a second convent at Pastrane, and in 1568 a third at Manreza, whither she translated that from Durvelle, and in 1572 a fourth at Alcala. The example and the exhortations of St John inspired the religious with a perfect spirit of solitude, humility, and mortification. His wonderful love of the cross appeared in all his actions, and it was by meditating continually on the sufferings of Christ that it increased daily in his soul; for love made him desire to resemble his crucified Redeemer in all manner of humiliations and sufferings.

St John, after tasting the first sweets of holy contemplation, found himself deprived of all sensible devotion. This spiritual dryness was followed by interior trouble of mind, scruples, and a disrelish of spiritual exercises, which yet he was careful never to forsake. The devils, at the same time, assaulted him with violent temptations, and men persecuted him by calumnies. But the most terrible of all these pains was that of scrupulosity and interior desolation, in which he seemed to see hell open ready to swallow him up. He describes admirably what a soul feels in this trial in his book called "The Obscure Night." This state of interior desolation contemplative souls, in some degree or other, first pass through before their hearts are prepared to receive the communication of God's special graces. By it our saint obtained a perfect poverty and nakedness of spirit, freed from all the refined passions of self-love, and an excellent conformity to the holy will of God, which can only be built on the destruction of self-will, a heroic patience, and a courageous perseverance. After some time, certain rays of light, comfort, and divine sweetness scattered these mists and translated the soul of the servant of God into a paradise of interior delights and heavenly sweetness. This was again succeeded by another more grievous trial of spiritual darkness which spread itself over his soul, accompanied with interior pains and temptations, in which God seemed to have forsaken him, and to have become deaf to his sighs and tears. So violent was his sorrow in this state of privation, that it seemed he must have died of grief if God had not supported him by his grace. In the calm which followed this terrible tempest he was wonderfully repaid in divine comforts. Surrounded with a new light, he saw clearly the incomparable advantages of suffering—especially by the severest interior trials. He never received any extraordinary favour which was not preceded by some great tribulation; which is an ordinary conduct of the sweet providence of God in regard to his servants for their great spiritual advantage. God, in the sensible visits of his grace, draws a soul by his charms to run in the sweet paths of his love; but her virtue is chiefly perfected by tribulations. Trials were,

by grace, the chief instruments of the admirable perfection to which our saint arrived. St Teresa made use of him to impart the spirit of her reform to the religious in all the houses which she established. The convent in which she had made her first profession, at Avila, had always opposed her reformation. Yet the Bishop of Avila thought it necessary that she should be made prioress there, to retrench at least the frequent visits of seculars. She sent for St John and appointed him the spiritual director of this house in 1576. He soon engaged them to shut up their parlours, and to cut off the scandalous abuses which were inconsistent with a religious life of retirement and penance. Many seculars likewise put themselves under his direction, and he preached the word of God with wonderful unction and fruit. But God would be glorified by his sufferings, and to make them the more sensible to him, permitted his own brethren to be the instruments thereof, as Christ himself was betrayed by a disciple. The old Carmelite friars looked on this reformation, though undertaken with the licence and approbation of the general, given to St Teresa, as a rebellion against their Order; and, in their chapter at Placentia, condemned St John as a fugitive and an apostate. This resolution being taken, they sent soldiers and sergeants, who broke open his door and tumultuously carried him to the prison of his convent; and, knowing the veneration which the people at Avila had for his person, removed him from thence to Toledo, where he was locked up in a dark noisome cell, into which no light had admittance but through a little hole three fingers broad. Scarce any other nourishment was allowed him during the nine months which he remained there but bread, a little fish, called sardines, and water. He was released after nine months by the credit of St Teresa, and by the protection of the mother of God. In this destitute condition he had been favoured with many heavenly comforts, which made him afterwards say, "Be not surprised if I show so great a love for sufferings; God gave me a high idea of their merit and value when I was in the prison of Toledo."

He had no sooner recovered his liberty than he was made superior of the little convent of Calvary, situate in a desert, and in 1579 founded that of Baëza. In 1581 he was chosen prior of Granada; in 1585 vicar-provincial of Andalusia; and, in 1588, first definitor of the Order. He founded at the same time the convent of Segovia. In all his employments, the austerities which he practised seemed to exceed bounds; and he only slept two or three hours in a night, employing the rest in prayer, in presence of the blessed sacrament. He showed always the most sincere and profound humility, and even love of abjection, an inimitable fervour and zeal for all the exercises of religion, and an insatiable desire of suffering. Hearing Christ once say to him, "John, what recompence dost thou ask of thy labours?" He answered, "Lord, I ask no other recompence than to suffer and be condemned for thy love." At the very name of the cross

he fell into an ecstasy, in the presence of mother Anne of Jesus. Three things he frequently asked of God: 1st, That he might not pass one day of his life without suffering something; 2ndly, That he might not die superior; 3rdly, That he might end his life in humiliation, disgrace, and contempt. The passion of our Redeemer was the usual subject of his meditations, and he exceedingly recommends the same to others in his writings. He was frequently so absorbed in God that he was obliged often to offer violence to himself to treat of temporal affairs, and sometimes, when called out from prayer, was incapable of doing it. Coming to himself from sudden raptures, he would cry out with words, as it were of fire, "Let us take wing and fly on high. What do we do here, dear brethren? Let us go to eternal life." This love appeared in a certain brightness which darted from his countenance on many occasions, especially when he came from the altar or from prayer. A person of distinction was one day so moved with the sight of it, perceiving the heavenly light of his face to dazzle his eyes and pierce his heart with divine love, that on the spot he took a resolution to renounce the world and embraced the Order of St Dominic. A lady coming to confession to him was so struck with a heavenly light which shone from his countenance and penetrated her soul, that she immediately laid aside her jewels and gaudy attire, and consecrated herself to God in strict retirement, to the astonishment of the whole city of Segovia. His love of his neighbour was no less wonderful, especially towards the poor, the sick, and sinners; his continual tenderness and affection for his enemies, and the benefactions and kindness with which he always studied to return good for evil, were most admirable. For fear of contracting any attachments to earthly things, he was a rigorous observer and lover of poverty. All the furniture of his little cell or chamber consisted in a paper image and a cross made of rushes, and he would have the meanest beads and breviary, and wear the most threadbare habit he could get. A profound sentiment of religion made him bear an extreme respect to whatever belonged, even remotely, to churches, or to the service of God. The same motive of the honour of God sanctified all his actions. He employed many hours every day and night in prayer, and often before the blessed sacrament, with extraordinary fervour. True devotion he described to be humble, not loving to be lofty; silent, not active; without attachment to anything; without singularity or presumption; full of distrust in itself; following with ardour simple and common rules. In 1591 the chapter of his Order met at Madrid, in which St John opposed too severe measures used in the punishment of disobedience against Father Gratian, who had been a great assistant to St Teresa; and likewise strenuously spoke against a motion supported by some of the chiefs, for casting off the direction of the Teresain nuns. This gave offence to some whom envy and jealousy had indisposed against him, and by their means the servant of God was thrust out of all employ-

ments in his Order. It was with joy that he saw himself in disgrace and at liberty, and retired into the little solitary convent of Pegnuela, in the mountains of Sierra Morena.

God was pleased to finish his martyrdom by a second grievous persecution from his own brethren before his death. His banishment to Pegnuela he thought his happiness, and always excused and commended father commissary and the other authors of his disgrace, and hindered all others from writing to the vicar-general of the injustices done him. There were in the Order two fathers of great authority, who declared themselves his implacable enemies, harbouring malice and envy in their breasts, which they cloaked under the sanctified name of holy zeal. In the saint's disgrace, one of them, called F. Diego Evangelista, ran over the whole province to beg and trump up accusations against the servant of God, and boasted that he had sufficient proofs to have him expelled the Order. The saint said nothing all this while, only that he was ready to receive with joy any punishment. Everybody at that time forsook him; all were afraid of seeming to have any commerce with him, and burnt the letters which they had received from him, lest they might be involved in his disgrace. St John had no other comfort or refuge but prayer, in which the abundant consolations of the Holy Ghost rendered his sufferings sweet to him. This storm ceased when the informations of Diego were laid before the superiors; for had they been all true, they amounted to nothing which deserved any chastisement. The sweetness of the divine love and peace which overflowed the soul of the servant of God all this time, filled him with interior joy, which increased in proportion as he was more abandoned by creatures. "The soul of one who serves God," says the saint,<sup>1</sup> "always swims in joy, always keeps holiday, is always in her palace of jubilation, ever singing with fresh ardour and fresh pleasure, a new song of joy and love."

St John, living in the practice of extreme austerities, and in continual contemplation, fell sick, and when he could no longer conceal his distemper, the provincial ordered him to leave Pegnuela, that place being destitute of all relief, and gave him the choice either to go to Baëza or to Ubeda. The first was a very convenient convent and had for prior an intimate friend of the saint. The other was poor, and F. Francis Chrysostom was prior there, the other person whom he had formerly corrected, and who was no less his enemy than F. Diego. The love of suffering made St John prefer this house of Ubeda. The fatigue of his journey had caused his leg to swell exceedingly, and it burst in many places from the heel quite to the knee, besides five ulcers or wounds under his foot. He suffered excessive pains from the violence of the inflammation, and from the frequent incisions and operations of the surgeons, from the top to the bottom of his leg. His fever all this time allowed him no rest. These racking pains he suffered

<sup>1</sup> St John of the Cross, *Flame of Love*, p. 523.

three whole months with admirable patience, in continual peace tranquillity, and joy, never making the least complaint, but often embracing the crucifix and pressing it close upon his breast when the pain was very sharp. The unworthy prior treated him with the utmost inhumanity, forbade anyone to be admitted to see him, changed the infirmarian because he served him with tenderness, locked him up in a little cell, made him continual harsh reproaches, and would not allow anything but the hardest bread and food, refusing him even what seculars sent in for him; all which the saint suffered with joy in his countenance. God himself was pleased to complete his sacrifice, and abandoned him for some time to a great spiritual dryness, and a state of interior desolation. But his love and patience were the more heroic. The provincial happening to come to Ubeda a few days before his death was grieved to see this barbarous usage, opened the door of his cell, and said that such an example of invincible patience and virtue ought to be public, not only to his religious brethren, but to the whole world. The prior of Ubeda opened his eyes, begged the saint's pardon, received his instructions for the government of his community, and afterwards accused and condemned himself with many tears. As for the saint himself, we cannot give a better description of the situation of his holy soul in his last moments than in his own words, where he speaks of the death of a saint,<sup>1</sup> "Perfect love of God makes death welcome, and most sweet to a soul. They who love thus, die with burning ardours and impetuous flights through the vehemence of their desires of mounting up to their beloved. The rivers of love in the heart, now swell almost beyond all bounds, being just going to enter the ocean of love. She seems already to behold that glory, and all things in her seem already turned into love, seeing there remains no other separation than a thin web, the prison of the body being almost broken." This seems the exact portraiture of the soul of our saint upon the point of leaving this world. Two hours before he died he repeated aloud the *Miséréré* psalm with his brethren; then he desired one to read to him part of the book of Canticles, appearing himself in transports of joy. He at length cried out, "Glory be to God"; pressed the crucifix on his breast, and after some time said, "Lord, into thy hands I commend my soul"; with which words he calmly breathed forth his soul on the 14th of December, in 1591, being forty-nine years old, of which he had spent twenty-eight in a religious state. Almighty God exalted him after his death by several miracles; amongst which the cure of a nun of the Annunciation, at Neuf-Château, in Lorrain, struck with a palsy, in 1705, effected on the ninth day of a Novena of devotion to this saint, was juridically proved in the court of the Bishop of Toul. St John was canonized by Benedict XIII in 1726, and his office in the Roman Breviary was appointed on this 24th of November. His body

<sup>1</sup> *Flamma viva Amoris*, p. 507.

remains at Segovia. A history of his revelations and many miracles, with an exact account of his writings, and mystical theology may be read in his life by F. Dositheus of Alexis.

The spirit of Christianity is the spirit of the Cross. To attain to and to live by pure love, we must live and die upon the Cross, or at least in the spirit of the Cross. Jesus merited all the graces we receive by suffering for us; and it is by suffering with him that we are best prepared to be enriched with them. Hence afflictions are part of the portion which, together with the hundredfold of his consolations, he has promised to his most beloved servants. His most holy and innocent mother bore a large share in all his sufferings. His apostles and other most faithful servants, in proportion to the high degree in which they stood in his favour, drank of this cup. Those souls which he has raised to the highest degree of familiarity in this life, he always prepared for that grace by severe trials. But in the divine love they found a recompense, which richly paid them for all its cost, this love being its own present reward, as it is a fire which is its own fuel.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 24:*

ST CHRYSOGONUS, whose name appears in the canon of the Mass: ST CEANAN or KENAN, Bishop of Duleek in Ireland: ST FLORA and ST MARY, virgins and martyrs. Flora was of Mahometan extraction by her father, but secretly instructed in the Christian faith by her mother. Mary was sister to a deacon. They were beheaded at the same time: ST JOHN OF THE CROSS, a fellow-worker with St Theresa in the reform of the Carmelite Order and one of the greatest writers on mystical theology in modern times. He died on 1591.

## NOVEMBER 25

### ST CATHERINE, VIRGIN, MARTYR, PATRONESS OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHERS

[Jos. Assemani in *Calend. Univ. ad Nov. 24*, t. v. p. 375.]

ST CATHERINE, whom the Greeks call *Æcatherina*, glorified God by an illustrious confession of the faith of Christ at Alexandria, under Maximinus II. Her acts are so much adulterated that little use can be made of them. The Emperor Basil, in his Greek Menology, relates with them that this saint, who was of the royal blood and an excellent scholar, confuted a company of the ablest heathen philosophers, whom Maximinus had commanded to enter into a disputation with her, and that being converted by her to the faith, they were all burnt in one fire for confessing the same. He adds, that Catherine was at length beheaded. She is said first to have been put upon an engine made of four wheels joined together and stuck with sharp pointed spikes that, when the wheels were moved, her body might be torn to pieces. The acts add that at the first stirring of the terrible engine, the cords with which the martyr was tied were broken asunder by the invisible power of an angel, and, the engine falling to pieces by the wheels being

separated from one another, she was delivered from that death. Hence the name of St Catherine's wheel.

The learned Joseph Assemani thinks that all the account we have of the particulars relating to this saint, upon which we can depend, is what we meet with in Eusebius, though that historian mentions not her name. His relation is as follows:<sup>1</sup> "There was a certain woman, a Christian, and the richest and most noble of all the ladies of Alexandria, who, when the rest suffered themselves to be deflowered by the tyrant (Maximin), resisted and vanquished his unbounded and worse then beastly lust. This lady was most illustrious for her high birth and great wealth; and likewise for her singular learning: but she preferred her virtue and her chastity to all worldly advantages. The tyrant, having in vain made several assaults upon her virtue, would not behead her, seeing her ready to die, but stripped her of all her estates and goods and sent her into banishment." Maximin, not long after, declared war against Licinius, and after several engagements, was at length defeated by him in 313. Having lost his empire after a reign of five years, he fled to Tarsus, and there died in extreme misery. The body of St Catherine was discovered by the Christians in Egypt about the eighth century, when they groaned under the yoke of the Saracens. It was soon after translated to the great monastery on the top of Mount Sinai in Arabia, built by St Helen, and sumptuously enlarged and beautified by the Emperor Justinian, as several old inscriptions and pictures in Mosaic work in that place testify. Falconius, Archbishop of San-Severina, speaks of this translation as follows: "As to what is said, that the body of this saint was conveyed by angels to Mount Sinai, the meaning is that it was carried by the monks of Sinai to their monastery, that they might devoutly enrich their dwelling with such a treasure. It is well known that the name of an angelical habit was often used for a monastic habit, and that monks, on account of their heavenly purity and functions, were anciently called 'Angels.'" From that time we find more frequent mention made of the festival and relics of St Catherine. St Paul of Latra kept her feast with extraordinary solemnity and devotion. In the eleventh age Simeon, a monk of Sinai, coming to Rouen to receive an annual alms of Richard, Duke of Normandy, brought with him some of her relics, which he left there. The principal part of the mortal remains of this saint is still kept in a marble chest in the church of this monastery on Mount Sinai, described by Dr Richard Pocock.

From this martyr's uncommon erudition, and the extraordinary spirit of piety by which she sanctified her learning and the use she made of it, she is chosen in the schools the patroness and model of Christian philosophers. Learning is, next to virtue, the most noble ornament and the

<sup>1</sup> Eus. Hist. lib. viii. c. 14, p. 400, ed. Cantabr. anno 1720.

highest improvement of the human mind, by which all its natural faculties obtain an eminent degree of perfection. The memory is exceedingly improved by exercise; those who complain that in them this faculty is like a sieve may, especially in youth, render it by use retentive of whatever is necessary, and particularly adapted to be a storehouse of names, facts, or entire discourses, according to everyone's exigency or purposes. As the understanding is the light of the soul, so is it plain how exceedingly this is enlarged both by exercise and by the acquisition of solid science and useful knowledge. Judgment, the most valuable of all the properties of the mind and by which the other faculties are poised, governed, and directed, is formed and perfected by experience and regular well-digested studies and reflection; and by them it attains to true justness and taste. The mind by the same means acquires a steadiness, and conquers the aversion which sloth raises against the serious employment of its talents. It is doubtless the will of the Creator that all his works be raised to that degree of perfection of which they are capable and, where our industry is required to this, it becomes a duty incumbent upon us. A piece of ground left wild produces nothing but weeds and briars, which by culture would be covered with corn, flowers, and fruit. The difference is not less between a rough mind and one that is well cultivated. The same culture, indeed, suits not all persons. Generally the more sublime theological studies suit not those who are excluded from teaching, though women upon whom the domestic instruction of children in their infancy mainly depends, ought to be well instructed in the motives of religion, articles of faith, and all the practical duties and maxims of piety. Then history, geography, and some tincture of works of genius and spirit may be joined with suitable arts and other accomplishments of their sex and condition, provided they be guided by and referred to religion, and provided books of piety and exercises of devotion always have the first place both in their hearts and in their time.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 25:*

ST CATHERINE, a royal, learned and rich virgin, gloriously martyred at Alexandria. After many miracles her body was discovered in the eighth century. She is the Patroness of Christian philosophers: ST ERASMUS or ELME, lived as a hermit on Mount Lebanon for seventeen years; he is named a martyr in the Roman and other calendars.

## NOVEMBER 26

### ST PETER, MARTYR, BISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA (A.D. 311)

[From Eusebius, Theodoret, &c. See Tillemont, t. v.; Ceillier, t. iv. p. 17; Orsi, t. iv. lib. x.]

EUSEBIUS calls this great prelate the excellent doctor of the Christian religion, and the chief and divine ornament of bishops; and tells us that

he was admirable both for his extraordinary virtue and for his skill in the sciences and profound knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. In the year 300 he succeeded Theonas in the see of Alexandria, being the sixteenth Archbishop from St Mark; he governed that church with the highest commendation, says the same historian, during the space of twelve years, for the nine last of which he sustained the fury of the most violent persecutions carried on by Diocletian and his successors. Virtue is tried and made perfect by sufferings; and Eusebius observes that the fervour of our saint's piety and the rigour of his penance increased with the calamities of the church. That violent storm, which affrighted and disheartened several bishops and inferior ministers of the church, did but awake his attention, inflame his charity, and inspire him with fresh vigour. He never ceased begging of God for himself and his flock necessary grace and courage, and exhorting them to die daily to their passions, that they might be prepared to die for Christ. The confessors he comforted and encouraged by word and example, and was the father of many martyrs who sealed their faith with their blood. His watchfulness and care were extended to all the churches of Egypt, Thebais, or Upper Egypt and Lybia, which were under his immediate inspection. Notwithstanding the activity of St Peter's charity and zeal, several in whom the love of this world prevailed basely betrayed their faith to escape torments and death.

Among those who fell during this storm, none was more considerable than Meletius, Bishop of Lycopolis, in Thebais. That bishop was charged with several crimes; but apostasy was the main article alleged against him. St Peter called a council, in which Meletius was convicted of having sacrificed to idols and of other crimes, and sentence of deposition was passed against him. The apostate had not humility enough to submit, or to seek the remedy of his deep wounds by condign repentance, but put himself at the head of a discontented party which appeared ready to follow him to any lengths. To justify his disobedience, and to impose upon men by pretending a holy zeal for discipline, he published many calumnies against St Peter and his council; and had the assurance to tell the world that he had left the archbishop's communion, because he was too indulgent to the lapsed in receiving them too soon and too easily to communion. Thus he formed a pernicious schism, which took its name from him, and subsisted a hundred and fifty years. The author laid several snares for St Peter's life, and though by an overruling providence these were rendered ineffectual, he succeeded in disturbing the whole church of Egypt with his factions and violent proceedings; for he infringed the saint's patriarchal authority, ordained bishops within his jurisdiction, and even placed one in his metropolitical see. Sozomen tells us these usurpations were carried on with less opposition during a certain time when St Peter was obliged to retire to avoid the fury of the persecution. Arius, who was then among

the clergy of Alexandria, gave signs of his pride and turbulent spirit by espousing Meletius's cause as soon as the breach was open, but soon after quitted that party, and was ordained deacon by St Peter. It was not long before he relapsed again to the Meletians, and blamed St Peter for excommunicating the schismatics and forbidding them to baptize. The holy bishop, by his knowledge of mankind, was by this time convinced that pride, the source of uneasiness and inconstancy, had taken deep root in the heart of this unhappy man; and that so long as this evil was not radically cured the wound of his soul was only skinned over by a pretended conversion, and would break out again with greater violence than ever. He therefore excommunicated him, and could never be prevailed with to revoke that sentence. St Peter wrote a book on the Divinity, out of which some quotations are preserved in the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon.<sup>1</sup> Also a paschal treatise, of which some fragments are extant.<sup>2</sup> From St Epiphanius<sup>3</sup> it appears that St Peter was in prison for the faith in the reign of Diocletian, or rather of Galerius Maximian; but after some time recovered his liberty. Maximin Daia, Cæsar in the East, renewed the persecution in 311, which had been considerably abated by a letter written the same year by the Emperor Galerius in favour of the Christians. Eusebius informs us that Maximin coming himself to Alexandria, St Peter was immediately seized, when no one expected such a storm and, without any form of trial, by the sole order of the tyrant, hurried to execution. With him were beheaded three of his priests, Faustus, Dio, and Ammonius. This Faustus seems, by what Eusebius writes, to be the same person of that name who, sixty years before, was deacon to St Dionysius and companion of his exile.

The canons of the church are holy laws, framed by the wisest and most experienced pastors and saints for the regulation of the manners of the faithful, according to the most pure maxims of our divine religion and the law of nature, many intricate rules of which are frequently explained, and many articles of faith expounded in them. Every clergyman is bound to be thoroughly acquainted with the great obligations of his state and profession; for it is one of the general and most just rules of the canon law, and even of the law of nature, that "No man is excused from a fault by his ignorance in things which, by his office, he is bound to know." That anyone amongst the clergy should be a stranger to those decrees of the Universal Church and statutes of his own diocese, which regard the conduct and reformation of the clergy, is a neglect and an affected ignorance which aggravates the guilt of every transgression of which it is the cause, according to a well-known maxim of morality. After the knowledge of the

<sup>1</sup> Conc. Ephes. Act. 1, p. 508; Act. 7, p. 836 (Conc. t. iii.); Conc. Chalced. Act. 1, p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> Ap. Du Fresne, Lord Du Cange Pref. to *Chran. Pasch.* n. 7, pp. 4, 5.

<sup>3</sup> St Epiph. hær. 68.

Holy Scriptures, of the articles of faith, and the rules of a sound Christian morality, everyone who is charged with the direction of others, is obliged to have a competent tincture of those parts of the canon law which may fall in the way of his practice; bishops and their assistants stand in need of a more profound and universal skill, both in what regards their own office (in which Barbosa<sup>1</sup> may be a manuduction), and others.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 26 :*

ST CONRAD, Bishop of Constance, "a saint from the cradle" : ST LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE : ST NICON, surnamed METANOITE : ST PETER, martyr, Bishop of Alexandria; "excellent doctor of the Christian religion and chief ornament of bishops"—so Eusebius calls him : ST SYLVESTER COZZOLINI, Abbot of Osimo, nineteen miles from Loretto. Noted for his courage in reproofing vice. He founded twenty-five monasteries in Italy (1177).

### NOVEMBER 27

#### ST JAMES, SURNAMED INTERCISUS, MARTYR

ST JAMES was a native of Beth-Lapeta, a royal city in Persia, and a nobleman of the first rank, and of the highest reputation in that kingdom for his birth and great qualifications, both natural and acquired, and for the extraordinary honours and marks of favour which the king conferred upon him, and which were his most dangerous temptation. For when his prince declared war against the Christian religion, this courtier had not the courage to renounce his royal master and benefactor's friendship; and rather than forfeit his favour, abandoned the worship of the true God, which he before professed. His mother and wife were extremely afflicted at his fall, which they ceased not every day bitterly to deplore before God, and earnestly to recommend his unhappy soul to the divine mercy. Upon the death of King Isdegerdes, they wrote to him the following letter: "We were informed long ago, that for the sake of the King's favour and for worldly riches, you have forsaken the love of the immortal God. Think where that king now lies, on whose favour you set so high a value. Unhappy man! behold he is fallen to dust, which is the fate of all mortals, nor can you any longer hope to receive the least succour from him, much less to be protected by him from eternal torments. And know that if you persevere in your crimes, you yourself, by the divine justice, will fall under that punishment, together with the king your friend. As for our parts, we will have no more commerce with you." James was strongly affected by reading this letter, and began to reflect with himself what just reproaches his apostasy would deserve at the last day from the mouth of the great Judge. He appeared no more at court, shunned the company of those who would have endeavoured to seduce him, and renounced honours, pomp, and pleasures, the fatal lure which had occasioned his ruin. This was the disposition of our true penitent; nor did he stick, in the bitterness

<sup>1</sup> Barbosa, *De Officio Episcopi*. Item *De Officio Barochi*.

of his grief for his crime, openly to condemn himself. His words were soon carried to the new king, who immediately sent for him. The saint boldly confessed himself a Christian. Vararanes, with indignation and fury, reproached him with ingratitude, enumerating the many high favours and honours he had received from his royal father. St James calmly said, "Where is he at present? What is now become of him?" These words exceedingly exasperated the tyrant, who threatened that his punishment should not be a speedy death, but lingering torments. St James said, "Any kind of death is no more than a sleep. 'May my soul die the death of the just.'"<sup>1</sup> "Death," said the tyrant, "is not a sleep; it is a terror to lords and kings." The martyr answered, "It indeed terrifies kings, and all others who contemn God; because 'the hope of the wicked shall perish.'"<sup>2</sup> The king took him up at these words, and sharply said, "Do you then call us wicked men, O idle race, who neither worship God, nor the sun, moon, fire, or water, the illustrious offspring of the gods?" "I accuse you not," replied St James, "but I say that you give the incommunicable name of God to creatures."

The king, whose wrath was more and more kindled, called together his ministers and the judges of his empire, in order to deliberate what new cruel death could be invented for the chastisement of so notorious an offender. After a long consultation the council came to a resolution, that unless the pretended criminal renounced Christ, he should be hung on the rack, and his limbs cut off one after another, joint by joint. The sentence was no sooner made public than the whole city flocked to see this uncommon execution, and the Christians, falling prostrate on the ground, poured forth their prayers to God for the martyr's perseverance, who had been carried out from the court without delay to the place of execution. When he was arrived there he begged a moment's respite and, turning his face toward the east, fell on his knees, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, prayed with great fervour. After waiting some time, the executioners approached the intrepid servant of Christ and displayed their naked scimitars and other frightful weapons and instruments before his eyes; then they took hold of his hand and violently stretched out his arm; and in that posture explained to him the cruel death he was just going to suffer, and pressed him to avert so terrible a punishment by obeying the king. His birth and the high rank which he had held in the empire, the flower of his age and the comeliness and majesty of his person, moved the whole multitude of spectators to tears at the sight. The heathens conjured him with the most passionate and moving expressions and gestures to dissemble his religion only for the present time, saying he might immediately return to it again. The martyr answered them, "This death, which appeared to them to wear so dreadful a face, was very little for the purchase of eternal

<sup>1</sup> Num. xxiii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. x. 28.

life." Then, turning to the executioners, he said, "Why stand ye idle looking on? Why begin ye not your work?" They therefore cut off his right thumb. Upon which he prayed thus aloud: "O Saviour of Christians, receive a branch of the tree. It will putrefy, but will bud again, and, as I am assured, will be clothed with glory." The judge, who had been appointed by the king to oversee the execution, burst into tears at this spectacle, and all the people that were present did the same, and many cried out to the martyr, "It is enough that you have lost thus much for the sake of religion. Suffer not your most tender body thus to be cut piecemeal and destroyed. You have riches: bestow part of them on the poor for the good of your soul; but die not in this manner." St James answered, "The vine dies in winter, yet revives in spring: and shall not the body when cut down sprout up again?" When his first finger was cut off, he cried out, "My heart hath rejoiced in the Lord; and my soul hath exulted in his salvation."<sup>1</sup> Receive, O Lord, another branch." Here the joy of his heart seemed sensibly to overcome the pain he suffered, and appeared visibly in his countenance. At the lopping off of every finger he exulted and thanked God afresh. After the loss of the fingers of his right hand, and again after those of his left, he was conjured by the judges to conform and save himself. To whom he meekly answered, "He is not worthy of God who, after putting his hand to the plough, shall look back." The great toe of his right foot was next cut off and followed by the rest; then the little toe of the left foot and all the others after it. At the loss of each part the martyr repeated the praises of God, exulting as at a subject of fresh joy. When his fingers and toes were lopped off, he cheerfully said to the executioners, "Now the bows are gone, cut down the trunk. Do not pity me; for my heart hath rejoiced in the Lord, and my soul is lifted up to him who loveth the humble and the little ones." Then his right foot, after that his left foot: next the right, then the left hand were cut off. The right arm, and the left: then the right, and after that the left leg felt the knife. Whilst he lay weltering in his own blood, his thighs were torn from the hips. Lying a naked trunk, and having already lost half his body, he still continued to pray and praise God with cheerfulness till a guard, by severing his head from his body, completed his martyrdom. This was executed on the 27th of November, in the year of our Lord 421, the second of King Vararanes. The Christians offered a considerable sum of money for the martyr's relics, but were not allowed to redeem them. However, they afterwards watched an opportunity and carried them off by stealth. They found them in twenty-eight different pieces, and put them with the trunk into a chest or urn, together with the congealed blood, and that which had been received in linen cloths. But part of the blood had been sucked up by the sun, and its rays were so strongly dyed there-

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xv. 9.

with as to tinge the sacred limbs of the martyr, upon which they darted, with a red colour. The author of these acts, who was an eyewitness, adds, " We all, suppliant, implored the aid of the blessed James." The faithful buried his remains in a place unknown to the heathens. The triumph of this illustrious penitent and martyr has, in all succeeding ages, been most renowned in the churches of the Persians, Syrians, Coptes, Greeks, and Latins.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 27 :*

ST CUNGR, also known as DOCUNUS, Abbot, died in 711 : ST JAMES, surnamed INTERCUSUS, martyr, a Persian : ST MAHARSAPOR, a noble Persian prince and very zealous Christian, martyr : ST MAXIMUS, Bishop of Riez about 460, was steadfast in torture, imprisonment and death by Hunger : ST SECUNDIN or SEACHNAL, Bishop in Ireland, nephew and disciple of St Patrick : ST VIRGIL, Bishop of Salzburg, born in Ireland and distinguished at home and abroad for his learning and virtue.

## NOVEMBER 28

### ST STEPHEN THE YOUNGER, MARTYR (A.D. 764)

[From his authentic Acts, carefully compiled forty-two years after his death by Stephen of Constantinople; also from Cedrenus and Theophanes. See Ceillier, t. xviii. p. 521, and Jos. Assemani in Calend. Univ. t. v. p. 389.]

ST STEPHEN, surnamed the Younger, or of St Auxentius's Mount, one of the most renowned martyrs in the persecution of the Iconoclasts, was born at Constantinople in 714, and dedicated to God by his parents before he came into the world. They were rich in temporal possessions, but much richer in virtue; and took special care to see their son provided with proper masters and grounded in pious sentiments from his infancy. To dispose of their son in a way suitable to his pious inclinations and their own views in his education, they placed him, when he was fifteen years old, in the monastery of St Auxentius, not far from Chalcedon, and the abbot admitted him in the year following to the monastic habit and profession. Our saint entered into all the penitential exercises of the community with incredible ardour, and his first employment was to fetch in the daily provisions for the monastery. The death of his father, which happened some time after, obliged him to make a journey to Constantinople, where he sold his whole fortune and distributed the price among the poor. He had two sisters, one of which was already a nun at Constantinople; the other he took with his mother into Bithynia, where he placed them in a monastery. Stephen made sacred studies and meditation on the Holy Scriptures his principal employment, and the works of St Chrysostom were his Commentary on the Divine Oracles. John the abbot dying, the saint, though but thirty years of age, was unanimously placed at the head of the monastery. This was only a number of small cells scattered up and down the mountain, one of the highest in that province; and the new abbot succeeded his pre-

decessor in a very small cave on the summit, where he joined labour with prayer, copying books, and making nets, by which he gained his own subsistence and increased the stock of his monastery for the relief of the poor. His only garment was a thin sheep's skin, and he wore an iron girdle round his loins. Great numbers renounced the world to serve God under his direction; and a young widow, of great quality, who changed her name to that of Anne, became his spiritual daughter and took the religious veil in a nunnery situated at the foot of his mountain. After some years Stephen, out of a love of closer retirement, and a severer course of life, resigned his abbacy to one Marinus, built himself a remote cell much narrower than his cave, so that it was impossible for him to lie or stand up in it at his ease, and shut himself up in this sepulchre in the forty-second year of his age.

Constantine Copronymus carried on for twenty years the war which his father Leo had begun against holy images. In 754 he caused a pretended council of three hundred and thirty-eight Iconoclast bishops to meet at Constantinople, and to condemn the use of holy images as a remnant of idolatry,<sup>1</sup> and in all parts of the empire persecuted the Catholics to compel them to subscribe to this decree. His malice was chiefly levelled against the monks, from whom he apprehended the most resolute opposition. Being sensible of the influence of the example of our saint, and the weight which the reputation of his sanctity gave to his actions, he was particularly solicitous to engage his subscription. Callistus, a patrician, was dispatched to him on that errand, and used all the arts in his power to prevail with the saint to consent to the emperor's desire; but he was obliged to return full of confusion at a miscarriage where he had promised himself certain success. Constantine incensed at St Stephen's resolute answers, which the patrician reported to him, sent Callistus back with a party of soldiers with an order to drag him out of his cell. They found him so wasted with fasting and his limbs so much weakened by the straitness of his cell, that they were obliged to carry him on their shoulders to the bottom of the mountain, and there they kept him under a strong guard. Witnesses were suborned to accuse the saint, and he was charged with having criminally conversed with the holy widow Anne. This lady protested he was innocent, and called him a holy man; and because she would not come into the emperor's measures, she was severely whipped and then confined to a monastery at Constantinople, where she died soon after of the hard usage she suffered.

The emperor, seeking a new occasion to put Stephen to death, persuaded one of his courtiers, called George Syncletus, to draw him into a snare. Constantine had forbid the monasteries to receive any novice to the habit. George, going to Mount St Auxentius, fell on his knees to St Stephen and begged to receive the monastic habit. The saint knew him to belong to the Court because he was shaved, the emperor having forbid any at his

<sup>1</sup> Conc. t. vii. p. 401.

court to wear beards. But the more St Stephen urged the emperor's prohibition, the more earnestly the impostor pressed him to admit him to the habit, pretending that both his temporal safety from the persecutors and his eternal salvation depended upon it. Soon after he had received the habit he ran with it to the court, and the next day the emperor produced him in that garb in the amphitheatre before the people, who were assembled by his order for that purpose. The emperor inflamed them by a violent invective against the saint and the monastic Order; then publicly tore his habit off his back and the populace trampled upon it. The emperor immediately sent a body of armed men to St Auxentius's Mount, who dispersed all the monks and burnt down the monastery and church to the very foundation. They took St Stephen from the place of his confinement there, and carried him to the seaside, striking him with clubs, taking him by the throat, tearing his legs in the thorns, and treating him with injurious language. In the port of Chalcedon they put him on board of a small vessel, and carried him to a monastery at Chrysopolis, a small town not very far from Constantinople, where Callistus and several Iconoclast bishops, with a secretary of state and another officer, came to visit and examine him. They treated him first with civility and afterwards with extreme harshness. He boldly asked them how they could call that a general council which was not approved by the pope of Rome, without whose participation the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs was forbid by a canon. Neither had the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, or Jerusalem approved of that assembly. He, with the liberty of a martyr, defended the honour due to holy images, insomuch that Callistus, when they returned to Constantinople, said to the emperor, "My lord, we are overcome; this man is very powerful in argument and learning, and despises death." The emperor, transported with rage, condemned the holy man to be carried into banishment into the island of Proconesus, in the Propontis. In that place he was joined by many of his monks, and his miracles increased the reputation of his sanctity and multiplied the defenders of holy images. This circumstance mortified the tyrant who, two years after, ordered him to be removed to a prison in Constantinople and loaded with irons. Some days after the saint was carried before the emperor, who asked him whether he believed that men trampled on Christ by trampling on his image. "God forbid," said the martyr. Then taking a piece of money in his hand, he asked what treatment he should deserve who should stamp upon that image of the emperor. The assembly cried out that he ought to be severely punished. "Is it then," said the saint, "so great a crime to insult the image of the emperor of the earth, and none to cast into the fire that of the king of heaven?" Some days after this examination the emperor commanded that he should be beheaded, but recalled the sentence before the martyr arrived at the place of execution, resolving to reserve him for a more cruel death; and,

after some deliberation, sent an order that he should be scourged to death in prison. They who undertook this barbarous execution left the work imperfect. The tyrant, understanding that he was yet alive, cried out, "Will no one rid me of this monk?" Whereupon certain courtiers stirred up a mob of impious wretches who, running to the jail, seized the martyr, dragged him through the streets of the city with his feet tied with cords, and many struck him with stones and staves, till one despatched him by dashing out his brains with a club. The rest continued their insults on his dead body till his limbs were torn asunder, and his brains and bowels left on the ground. Cedrenus places his martyrdom in the year 764, who seems to have been better informed than Theophanes, who mentions it in 757.

The martyrs, under their torments and the ignominy of a barbarous death, seem the most miserable of men to carnal eyes, but to those of faith nothing is more glorious, nothing more happy. What can be greater or more noble than for a man to love those who most unjustly hate and persecute him, and only to wish and pray for their temporal and eternal happiness? What marks do we show of this heroic fortitude, of this complete victory over our passions, of this steady adherence to God and the cause of virtue? Let us take a review of our own hearts, and of our conduct, and examine whether this meekness, this humility, this charity, and this fortitude appear to be the spirit by which our souls are governed? If not, it behoves us without loss of time to neglect nothing for attaining that grace by which our affections will be moulded into this heavenly frame, the great fruit of our divine religion.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 28:*

ST JAMES of La Marca of Ancona. He found that "persons living in the world must use the antidote of conversing much with God": ST STEPHEN THE YOUNGER, one of the most renowned martyrs in the persecution of Iconoclasts, born 714.

## NOVEMBER 29

### ST SATURNINUS, MARTYR, BISHOP OF TOULOUSE (A.D. 257)

[From his authentic acts in Surius and Ruinart, quoted by St Gregory of Tours, lib. i. Hist. c. 28. See Tillemont, t. iii. p. 297. Calmet, Hist. de Lorraine, lib. iii. p. 130. Rivet. Hist. Litter. de la France, t. i. p. 306.]

ST SATURNINUS went from Rome by the direction of Pope Fabian, about the year 245, to preach the faith in Gaul, where St Trophimus, the first Bishop of Arles, had some time before gathered a plentiful harvest. In the year 250, when Decius and Gratus were consuls, St Saturninus fixed his episcopal see at Toulouse. Fortunatus tells us,<sup>1</sup> that he converted a

<sup>1</sup> Lib. ii. c. 9.

great number of idolaters by his preaching and miracles. This is all the account we have of him till the time of his holy martyrdom. The author of his acts, who wrote about fifty years after his death, relates that he assembled his flock in a small church; and that the capitol, which was the chief temple in the city, lay in the way between that church and the saint's habitation. In this temple oracles were given; but the devils were struck dumb by the presence of the saint as he passed that way. The priests spied him one day going by, and seized and dragged him into the temple, declaring that he should either appease the offended deities by offering sacrifice to them, or expiate the crime with his blood. Saturninus boldly replied, "I adore only one God, and to him I am ready to offer a sacrifice of praise. Your gods are devils, and are more delighted with the sacrifice of your souls than with those of your bullocks. How can I fear them who, as you acknowledge, tremble before a Christian?" The infidels, incensed at this reply, abused the saint with all the rage that a mad zeal could inspire, and after a great variety of indignities, tied his feet to a wild bull, which was brought thither to be sacrificed. The beast being driven from the temple ran violently down the hill, so that the martyr's skull was broken and his brains dashed out. His happy soul was released from the body by death and fled to the kingdom of peace and glory, and the bull continued to drag the sacred body, and the limbs and blood were scattered on every side, till the cord breaking, what remained of the trunk was left in the plain without the gates of the city. Two devout women laid the sacred remains on a bier, and hid them in a deep ditch to secure them from any further insult, where they lay in a wooden coffin till the reign of Constantine the Great. Then Hilary, Bishop of Toulouse, built a small chapel over this his holy predecessor's body. Silvius, bishop of that city, toward the close of the fourth century, began to build a magnificent church in honour of the martyr, which was finished and consecrated by his successor Exuperius, who, with great pomp and piety, translated the venerable relics into it. This precious treasure remains there to this day with due honour. The martyrdom of this saint probably happened in the reign of Valerian, in 257.

In the spirit of the primitive apostles of nations we see what that of a true disciple of Christ ought to be. What was a Christian in those happy times of fervour? He was a man penetrated with the most lively sentiments of his own nothingness; yet courageous and magnanimous in his humility; disengaged from and raised above the world: crucified to his senses and dead to himself: having no interest but that of Jesus Christ; mild, affable, patient, full of tenderness and charity for others, burning with zeal for religion, always ready to fly to the remotest parts of the globe to carry the light of the gospel to infidels, or to die with the martyrs in defence of

the divine truth. Such a spirit and such a life, is something far greater and more astonishing than any signs of external miracles.

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 29:*

BLESSED CUTHBERT MAYNE, martyr: St RADBOD, Bishop of Utrecht, who wrote the hymns and office of St Martin and many pious poems: St SATURNINUS, martyr, Bishop of Toulouse, who went from Rome by direction of Pope Fabian to preach in Gaul. He converted many by his prayers and miracles and suffered a terrible death, boldly steadfast to the end (about 257): also another St SATURNINUS, martyr, beheaded for the faith in Rome with St SISINNIUS in 304, and buried two miles from the city on the road to Nomentum.

## NOVEMBER 30

### ST ANDREW, APOSTLE

[The acts of this apostle's martyrdom, though rejected by Tillemont, &c., are maintained to be genuine by Nat. Alexander, Hist. t. i. and by Mr Woog, professor of history and antiquities in Leipsic, in learned dissertations, published in 1748 and 1751. The authority of this piece being contested, little stress is laid upon it; and the following account is gathered from the sacred writings, and those of the fathers.]

ST ANDREW was a native of Bethsaida, a town in Galilee, upon the banks of the lake of Genesareth. He was the son of Jonas, or John, a fisherman of that town, and brother to Simon Peter, but whether elder or younger the Holy Scriptures have not acquainted us. They had afterwards a house at Capharnaum, where Jesus lodged when he preached in that city. It is no small proof of the piety and good inclinations of St Andrew, that when St John Baptist began to preach penance in the desert, he was not content with going to hear him as others did, but became his disciple, passed much of his time in hearing his instructions, and studied punctually to practise all his lessons and copy his example; but he often returned home to his fishing trade. He was with his master when St John Baptist, seeing Jesus pass by the day after he had been baptized by him, said, "Behold the Lamb of God."<sup>1</sup> Andrew, by the ardour and purity of his desires and his fidelity in every religious practice, deserved to be so far enlightened as to comprehend this mysterious saying, and without delay he and another disciple of the Baptist went after Jesus, who drew them secretly by the invisible bands of his grace, and saw them with the eyes of his spirit before he beheld them with his corporal eyes. Turning back as he walked and seeing them follow him, he said, "What seek ye?" They said they desired to know where he dwelt; and he bade them come and see. There remained but two hours of that day, which they spent with him, and, according to several fathers, the whole night following. "O how happy a day, how happy a night did they pass!" cries out St Austin. "Who will tell us what things they then learned from the mouth of their Saviour!"

Andrew, who loved affectionately his brother Simon, called afterwards Peter, could not rest till he had imparted to him the infinite treasure which

<sup>1</sup> John i. 36.

he had discovered, and brought him to Christ that he might also know him. Simon was no sooner come to Jesus than the Saviour of the world admitted him as a disciple and gave him the name of Peter. The brothers tarried one day with him to hear his divine doctrine, and the next day returned home again. From this time they became Jesus's disciples, not constantly attending upon him, as they afterwards did, but hearing him frequently, as their business would permit, and returning to their trade and family affairs again. Jesus, in order to prove the truth of his divine doctrine by his works, wrought his first miracle at the marriage at Cana in Galilee, and was pleased that these two brothers should be present at it with his holy mother. Jesus, going up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, stayed some days in Judæa, and baptized in the Jordan. Peter and Andrew also baptized by his authority and in his name. Our Saviour being come back into Lower Galilee in autumn, and meeting one day Peter and Andrew fishing in the lake, before the end of the same year, he called them to a constant attendance upon the ministry of the gospel, saying that he would make them fishers of men. Whereupon they immediately left their nets to follow him, and never went from him again. The year following, the Son of God formed the college of his apostles, in which our two brothers are named by the evangelists at the head of the rest. Not long after Jesus went down to Capharnaum and lodged at the house of Peter and Andrew and, at the request of them both, cured Peter's wife's mother of a fever, by taking her by the hand and rebuking the fever, by which it left her. When Christ would not send away the multitude of five thousand persons who had followed him into the desert till they were refreshed with some food, St Philip said two hundred pennyworth of bread would not suffice. But Andrew seemed to express a stronger faith, saying there was a boy who had five barley loaves and two small fishes—which, indeed, were nothing among so many—but Christ could, if he pleased to exert his power, seeing he was greater than Eliseus who, with twenty loaves, fed a hundred men.<sup>1</sup> When Christ was at Bethania, at the house of Lazarus, a little before his Sacred Passion, certain Greeks who came to worship God at the festival, addressed themselves to Philip, begging him to introduce them to Jesus. Philip did not undertake to do it alone; but spoke to St Andrew, and they both together spoke to their divine master and procured these strangers that happiness. This shows the great credit St Andrew had with Christ; on which account St Bede calls him the Introducer to Christ, and says he had this honour because he brought St Peter to him. Christ having foretold the destruction of the temple, Peter, John, James, and Andrew asked him privately when that should come to pass, that they might forewarn their brethren to escape the danger.

After Christ's resurrection and the descent of the Holy Ghost, St

<sup>1</sup> 4 or 2 Kings iv. 43.

Andrew preached the gospel in Scythia, as Origen testifies. Sophronius, who wrote soon after St Jerom and translated his catalogue of illustrious men and some other works into Greek, adds Sogdiana and Colchis. Theodoret tells us that he passed into Greece; St Gregory Nazianzen mentions particularly Epirus and St Jerom Achaia. St Paulinus says this divine fisherman, preaching at Argos, put all the philosophers there to silence. St Philastrius tells us, that he came out of Pontus into Greece, and that in his time people at Sinope were persuaded that they had his true picture, and the pulpit in which he had preached in that city. The Muscovites have long gloried that St Andrew carried the gospel into their country as far as the mouth of the Borysthenes, and to the mountains where the city of Kiou now stands, and to the frontiers of Poland. If the ancients mean European Scythia, when they speak of the theatre of his labours, this authority is favourable to the pretensions of the Muscovites. The Greeks understand it of Scythia, beyond Sebastopolis in Colchis, and perhaps also of the European; for they say he planted the faith in Thrace, and particularly at Byzantium, afterwards called Constantinople. But of this we meet with no traces in antiquity. Several Calendars commemorate the feast of the chair of St Andrew at Patræ, in Achaia. It is agreed that he laid down his life there for Christ. St Paulinus says, that having taken many people in the nets of Christ he confirmed the faith which he had preached by his blood at Patræ. St Sophronius, St Gaudentius, and St Austin assure us that he was crucified; St Peter Chrysologus says, on a tree; Pseudo-Hippolytus adds, on an olive-tree. In the hymn of Pope Damasus it is barely mentioned that he was crucified. When the apostle saw his cross at a distance, he is said to have cried out, "Hail, precious cross, that hast been consecrated by the body of my Lord, and adorned with his limbs as with rich jewels. I come to thee exulting and glad: receive me with joy into thy arms. O good cross, that hast received beauty from our Lord's limbs; I have ardently loved thee; long have I desired and sought thee: now thou art found by me, and art made ready for my longing soul; receive me into thy arms, taking me from among men, and present me to my master; that he who redeemed me on thee, may receive me by thee." The body of St Andrew was translated from Patræ to Constantinople in 357, together with those of St Luke and St Timothy, and deposited in the Church of the Apostles, which Constantine the Great had built a little before. St Paulinus and St Jerom mention miracles wrought on that occasion. The churches of Milan, Nola, Brescia, and some other places, were at the same time enriched with small portions of these relics, as we are informed by St Ambrose, St Gaudentius, St Paulinus, &c.

It is the common opinion that the cross of St Andrew was in the form of the letter X, styled a cross decussate, composed of two pieces of timber

crossing each other obliquely in the middle. That such crosses were sometimes used is certain; yet no clear proofs are produced as to the form of St Andrew's cross. It is mentioned in the records of the duchy of Burgundy, that the cross of St Andrew was brought out of Achaia and placed in the nunnery of Weaune, near Marseilles. It was thence removed into the abbey of St Victor, in Marseilles, before the year 1250, and is still shown there. A part thereof, inclosed in a silver case gilt, was carried to Brussels by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy and Brabant, who, in honour of it, instituted the Knights of the Golden Fleece, who for the badge of their Order, wear a figure of this cross, called St Andrew's cross, or the cross of Burgundy. The Scots honour St Andrew as principal patron of their country, and their historians tell us that a certain abbot, called Regulus, brought thither from Patræ in 369, or rather from Constantinople some years later, certain relics of this apostle, which he deposited in a church which he built in his honour with a monastery called Abernethy, where now the city of St Andrews stands. Usher proves that many pilgrims resorted to this church from foreign countries, and that the Scottish monks of that place were the first who were called Culdees.<sup>1</sup> Hungus, King of the Picts, soon after the year 800, in thanksgiving for a great victory which he had gained over the Northumbrians, gave to this church the tenth part of all the land of his dominions. Kenneth II, King of the Scots, having overcome the Picts, and entirely extinguished their kingdom in North Britain, in 845, repaired and richly endowed the Church of St Regulus, or Rueil, in which the arm of St Andrew was reverently kept. The Muscovites say he preached the faith among them, and honour him as the principal titular saint of their empire. Peter the Great instituted under his name the first and most noble order of knighthood, or of the blue ribbon; leaving the project of a second Order of St Alexander Newski, or of the red ribbon, to be carried into execution by his widow.

St Andrew, by conversing with Christ, extinguished in his breast all earthly passions and desires, and attained to the happiness of his pure divine love. We often say to ourselves that we also desire to purchase holy love, the most valuable of all treasures, and the summit of dignity and happiness. But these desires are fruitless and mere mockery unless we earnestly set about the means. We must first, with the apostle, leave all things; that is to say, we must sincerely and in spirit forsake the world (though we live in it), and must also renounce and die to ourselves before we can be admitted to the familiar converse of our Redeemer and God, or before he opens to us the treasure of his choicest graces. In the same proportion that the world and self-love are banished from our hearts shall we advance in divine love. But this great virtue is learned, exercised, and

<sup>1</sup> See Fordun, *Scoti-Chr.* lib. ii. c. 46; et Usher, *Antiq.* c. 15, p. 345.

improved by conversing much with God in holy meditation, reading, and assiduous prayer and recollection; also by its external acts, in all manner of good works, especially those of fraternal charity and spiritual mercy.<sup>1</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on November 30:*

ST ANDREW, Apostle: ST NARSES, Bishop, and his COMPANION MARTYRS, including JOSEPH, his youthful disciple. Brought before Saphor, that king made him flattering offers if he would sacrifice to the sun, being very greatly taken with his venerable appearance and with the comeliness of Joseph, his pupil. Others also pressed them to conform. Many martyrs received their crowns at this same time: ST SAPOR, ST ISAAC (Bishops), ST MAHANES, ST ABRAHAM and ST SIMEON, also martyred in the thirteenth year of the same monarch, Saphor II.

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<sup>1</sup> On the panegyrists on St Andrew, see Fabricius in *Biblioth. Græcâ*, t. ix. p. 54; and in *Codice Apocryphe Novi Testimenti*, p. 707.

DECEMBER 1

ST ELIGIUS, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF NOYON,  
CALLED IN FRENCH, ELOY  
(A.D. 659)

[From his life compiled in two books by his intimate friend St Owen, Bishop of Rouen, thirteen years after his death, extant in Surius, D'Acheri, Spicileg, t. v. p. 147, translated into French with his homilies, by M. Levesque, at Paris, in octavo, in 1693. See Fleury, pp. 37, 38, 39; Rivet, Hist. Littér. t. iii. p. 595; Ceillier, t. xvii. p. 682; Gallia Christiana Nov. t. ix. p. 984.]

THE name of Eligius, and those of his father Eucherius and his mother Terrigia, show this saint to have been born not of French, but of Roman Gaulish extraction. He was born at Catelat, two leagues north of Limoges, about the year 588. His parents, who were very virtuous and in good circumstances, brought him up from his infancy in the fear of God, and seeing him industrious, placed him with a goldsmith named Abbo, who was a considerable person, master of the mint at Limoges, and a devout servant of God. Eligius was a youth of uncommon genius and address, and, by his extraordinary application, arrived at an eminent skill in his profession. The qualities of his mind and his steady virtue and religion exceedingly enhanced his reputation, and endeared him to all who had the happiness of his acquaintance. His heart was full of sincerity, his whole conduct was under the regulation of an exact prudence, and his temper sweet and obliging: his discourse was agreeable, modest, and easy, and his attendance on religious duties most assiduous and edifying. He never failed assisting at the whole divine office in the church, and never lost an opportunity of attending to sermons, or spiritual instructions. The oracles of the Holy Scriptures he carefully laid up in his memory, and made them the subject of his profound meditation, that they might sink deeply into his soul and that he might apply them to his own use.

Eligius having some business which called him into France, that is, on this side of the Loire, became known to Bobo, treasurer to Clotaire II, at Paris. This king, to whom Bobo had recommended him, gave the saint an order to make him a magnificent chair of state, adorned with gold and precious stones. Out of the materials the king furnished him, he made two such chairs or thrones instead of one. The king admired the skill and honesty of the workman, and finding by his discourse that he was a man of great parts, and endowed with excellent understanding, gave him a great share in his confidence, took him into his household,

and made him master of the mint. His great credit at court hindered him not from attending his profession, and he was much delighted in making rich shrines for the relics of saints. The tombs of St Martin at Tours, and of St Dionysius near Paris, were sumptuously and curiously adorned by him.<sup>1</sup> The shrines also of St Quintin, SS. Crispin and Crispinian at Soissons, St Lucian, St Piat, St Germanus of Paris, St Severinus, St Genevieve, &c., were made by our saint. These employments were no impediments to his exercises of piety. Even whilst he was at work he had some good book open before him, on which he frequently cast an eye to instruct himself at the same time in the law of God, and to kindle a fresh flame of devotion in his affections. On the walls round his chambers were also placed pious books, particularly those of the Holy Scriptures, which he read for a considerable time after his hour of prayer and singing psalms. The corruption of a court never infected his soul or impaired his virtue; such was his diligence in fencing his heart against it by the most powerful antidotes. He had not been long there when he formed a resolution of entering upon a more devout and austere way of living, took a strict view of his whole life, made a general confession of all the actions of his youth to a priest,<sup>2</sup> and imposed upon himself a severe penance. At first when he went to court he conformed to the fashion, and was magnificently habited, sometimes wearing nothing but silk, though at that time it was not very common: and he had waistcoats embroidered with gold, and sashes and purses adorned with gold and precious stones. Yet even then he privately wore a hair shirt: and after he had entered upon a stricter course of virtue, he gave all his ornaments to the poor and became so negligent in his dress that he often girded himself with a cord. The king, when he saw him in this habit, would often give him his own clothes and sash; but the saint gave to the poor all that he received from the king's bounty. The liberality of his sovereign enabled him to bestow great sums in alms. If any stranger asked for his house, he was answered: "Go into such a street, and to that part of it where you see a crowd of poor people." Wherever he went he was followed by a great number of them, and he himself, or one of his servants, distributed victuals and money to them. He daily fed a great number at his own house, whom he served himself, and he ate what they left. He gave them wine and flesh, though he touched neither himself; and sometimes he fasted two or three days together. Sometimes, when the usual hour was come and the table laid, he had nothing to give his poor people, having distributed all before; but he always relied upon providence, which never failed to supply him, either by means of the king or of some pious persons. He took care to bury the bodies of malefactors, and was particularly zealous to ransom captives.

<sup>1</sup> Vita St Eligij, c. 32. Du Chesne, Franc. Script. t. i. p. 578, n. 20.  
<sup>2</sup> Vita St Elig. c. vii.

When he knew that a slave was to be sold in any place he made haste thither and sometimes ransomed fifty or a hundred at a time, especially Saxons, who were sold in great companies. After he had set them at liberty, he gave them their choice either to return to their own country, or to continue with him, or to enter into monasteries: of these last he took particular care. One of the Saxon slaves whom he brought up with him in the practice of piety, became so eminent for sanctity, that he is commemorated among the saints on the 7th of January, under the name of St Theau. Several of his domestics sung the canonical office with him day and night. Among these are named Bauderic his freed-man; Tituan, who waited on him in his chamber, was of the nation of the Suevi, and arrived at the crown of martyrdom; Buchin, who had been a pagan and was afterwards abbot of Ferrieres; Andrew, Martin, and John, who by his means became clerks. Several relics of saints were fastened to the ceiling of his room, under which he prostrated himself upon a haircloth to pray; then he began to read, which he often broke off to lift up his eyes to heaven, sighing and weeping bitterly; for he was remarkable for an extraordinary tenderness of heart and easily melted into tears. If the king pressed him to come to him, sending one messenger after another, he would not go till he had finished his devotions. He never went out of doors without praying first, and making the sign of the cross; and the first thing he did, after he returned, was to pray. Discretion, mixed with simplicity, appeared in his countenance: he was tall, had a handsome head and a ruddy complexion: his hair was naturally curled. By the innocence and regularity of his life he made his court to his prince without design, more successfully than others do by flattery and other low arts.

Clotaire dying in 628, his son and successor Dagobert entertained so just an idea of the saint's virtue and wisdom that he frequently consulted him preferably to all his council about public affairs, and listened to his directions for his own private conduct. The king was so far from being offended at the liberty which the saint took in his counsels and admonitions that he treated him with the greater regard; which drew on him the envy and jealousy of the whole court, particularly of the vicious part of the nobility. All that the saint received was immediately employed in relieving the necessitous, or in raising charitable and religious foundations. The first of these was the abbey of Solignac, which he built two leagues from Limoges, on a piece of ground granted him by the king for that purpose. The saint richly endowed it, peopled it with monks from Luxeu, and made it subject to the inspection of the abbot of that monastery. This new community increased considerably in a little time, and consisted of a hundred and fifty persons, who worked at several trades and lived in admirable regularity. Dagobert also gave our saint a handsome house at Paris, which he converted into a nunnery and placed in it three hundred

religious women under the direction of St Auræa, whose name occurs in the Roman Martyrology on the 4th of October. This monastery has since been given to the Barnabites, and the estates which belonged to it are now annexed to the bishopric of Paris. When the saint had begun this building, he found that it exceeded the measure of the land which he had specified to his majesty by one foot; upon which, being struck with great grief and remorse, he immediately went to the king, and throwing himself at his feet, begged his pardon with many tears. Dagobert, surprised at his caution, to recompense his piety, doubled his former donation. When the saint was gone out, he said to his courtiers, "See how faithful and careful those who serve Christ are. My officers and governors stick not to rob me of whole estates, whereas Eligius trembles at the apprehension of having one inch of ground which is mine." It not being then allowed to bury within cities, the saint made a burial-place for these nuns without the walls, and built there a church in honour of St Paul, which is now a large parish church. The inhabitants of Brittany having provoked the king by making frequent inroads and plunders, he sent Eligius upon an embassy to them, who prevailed upon Judicaël, their prince, to go in person to Paris, and by his submissions appease the king's anger. Dagobert being desirous to employ the saint in his most important commissions, pressed him to take an oath of fidelity, as was usual on such occasions. Eligius having a scruple lest this would be to swear without sufficient necessity, excused himself with an obstinacy which for some time displeased the king. Dagobert at length perceiving that the only motive of his reluctance was an extreme tenderness of conscience, graciously assured him that his conscientious delicacy was a more secure pledge of his fidelity than the strongest oaths of others could have been.

The extraordinary piety and prudent fear of offending God which St Eligius showed in all his actions, made so strong an impression on the mind of St Owen when he was but twelve years old and lived in the court, that the fervent young nobleman resolved to walk in his steps; and, as he grew up, contracted so close a friendship with him that they seemed to have but one heart and one soul. Whilst they were laymen and lived at court they zealously laboured to maintain the purity of their faith and the unity of the church. St Eligius procured a council to be held at Orleans against certain heretics, drove a company of impious persons out of Paris and, with St Owen, employed his endeavours effectually to root out simony, a vice which had grievously infected France ever since the unhappy reign of Brunehalt. The sees of Noyon and Tourney, which had been united ever since St Medard in 512, and then comprised Upper Picardy and all the provinces that lie between that country and the mouth of the Rhine, became vacant by the death of St Acarius in 639, and St Eligius was required to take upon him that arduous charge, and soon after St Owen

was chosen Bishop of Rouen. King Clovis II, who had succeeded his father Dagobert, stood in need of such ministers. St Eligius obtained a delay of two years to prepare himself, during which time he was ordained priest and practised the clerical duties. St Owen did the like, having retired for that purpose beyond the Loire. They agreed to meet and receive the episcopal consecration together at Rouen, which they did on Sunday before Rogation week in 640, or, according to some, in 646. The inhabitants of the district of Ghent and Courtray, which then depended on the diocese of Noyon, were still pagans, and so fierce and savage that they would not so much as hear the gospel preached to them. This was the chief reason of choosing so zealous a pastor for them as St Eligius. From Rouen he only went back to court to take his last leave of it, and thence he repaired straight to Noyon.

Our saint in this new dignity increased his fasts and watchings with his labours, and showed the same humility, the same spirit of poverty, penance, and prayer as before; also the same charity towards the poor and the sick, whom he continued frequently to serve with his own hands, regularly entertaining twelve poor persons at his own table on certain days in the week. He always took particular delight to be in the company of the poor, and often left his clergy and others to shut himself up with them, and he often clothed them, washed their faces and hands, and shaved their heads with his own hands. The first year he employed entirely in reforming his clergy, and regulating the manners of his Christian flock. After this he turned his thoughts to the conversion of the infidels among the Flemings about Antwerp, and the Frisons, and Suevi, as far as the seashore, especially about Ghent and Courtray. A great part of Flanders was chiefly indebted to St Eligius for the happiness of receiving the light of the gospel. He preached in the territories of Antwerp, Ghent, and Courtray. He instructed with more than paternal tenderness, those who long refused to hear him, took care of their sick, comforted them in their afflictions, assisted them in their wants, and employed every means that the most tender and ingenious charity could suggest to overcome their obstinacy. The barbarians were at length softened, and considering his disinterestedness, his goodness, meekness, and mortified abstemious manner of living they began to admire and even to desire to imitate him. Many were converted, and these induced others to hear the holy prelate's sermons, from which they went in bodies to destroy their temples and idols of their own accord; then returned to the holy prelate and desired baptism. Eligius usually tried and instructed them for a whole year before he admitted them to the sacred laver of regeneration. By his discourses he raised the minds of the supine and slothful barbarians to an affection for heavenly things, and inspired them with a meek and peaceable temper; he taught them the means of rooting out of their hearts the love of pleasures and riches,

and of perfectly subduing the evil habits of lying, enmity, hatred, and revenge, and ceased not to inculcate the precept of fraternal charity. Every year, at Easter, he baptized great numbers both of old and young, whom he had brought to the knowledge of the true God, in the space of the twelve preceding months; to whom he had long before given the habit of catechumens, and who had long exercised themselves in suitable practices of fervent devotion and penance. The prudence and zeal of our holy pastor were not less remarkable in bringing sinners after baptism to sincere penance. Many sinners ran to receive penance by confessing their sins, and the holy bishop was very earnest in the care of their conversion. He exhorted all to frequent the churches, give alms, set their slaves at liberty, and practise all sorts of good works; and he engaged several of both sexes to embrace a monastic life. Once, not far from Noyon, he preached, on the feast of St Peter, against dancing, which the people made a frequent occasion of many sins. Many murmured hereat, and even threatened the holy prelate; but he preached the next festival on the same subject with greater vehemence than ever. Hereupon, the incorrigible sinners openly threatened his life. The servants of the lord of the place went about stirring up the whole country against him; for such men, where they are not restrained by their master's authority, easily become lawless and are the bane of a whole parish. The bishop at length found himself obliged to cut off these sons of Belial from the communion of the faithful, and to deliver them over to Satan for the remedy of their souls. Fifty of them were afflicted by God and made visible spectacles of his judgments; but, upon their repentance, were cured by the saint.

Among other prophecies, his prediction of the division of the French monarchy amongst the three sons of Clovis II, and its reunion under Theodoric, the youngest of them, was recorded by St Owen before its entire accomplishment.<sup>1</sup> This author informs us,<sup>2</sup> that our saint assembled the people every day and instructed them with indefatigable zeal. He insisted much on the obligation of almsdeeds, recommended the invocation of saints, and instructed the faithful to beware of the superstitious practices then in vogue; among which he reckons the observation of unlucky days, the solemnizing of New Year's day with drinking and diversions, and the like. He strongly recommended prayer, the partaking of the body and blood of Christ, extreme unction in time of sickness, and the sign of the cross to be always worn on our forehead, the efficacy of which sign he set forth. The seventeen homilies which bear his name, in the library of the fathers, cannot be his work; for the author had been a monk before he was bishop.<sup>3</sup> The charter of St Eligius for the foundation of the abbey of Solignac is still extant.<sup>4</sup> The saint having governed his flock nineteen

<sup>1</sup> Vita St Elig. lib. ii. c. 31. Fleury, lib. 40, n. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. lib. ii. c. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Bibl. Patr. t. xii. p. 300; Ceillier, p. 586; Rivet, p. 598.

<sup>4</sup> Mabill. Act. Ben. t. ii. pp. 1091, 1092.

years and a half, was favoured with a foresight of his death, and a little before he was seized with his last sickness foretold it to his disciples. Seeing them weep he said, "Grieve not, my children; but rather congratulate with me. I have longed for this time, and sighing under the miseries of this world, have wished for a releasement." Falling ill of a fever he prayed almost without interruption; and on the sixth day convened his disciples, and made them a pathetic exhortation to a virtuous life. They bursting all together into tears, he was not able to refrain from weeping with them; and on his knees he commended them all to God, praying him not to abandon them and to give them a holy pastor. After this he continued his private prayers for several hours; then, reciting the canticle *Nunc dimittis*, &c., and fervently commanding his soul into the hands of his Redeemer, he happily expired at one o'clock the next morning, on the 1st of December in 659, or in 665, if he was consecrated bishop in 646, being seventy years and some months old. Upon the news of his sickness, Queen Bathildes set out from Paris with her children, the lords of her court, and a numerous train; but arrived only the morning after his death. She bathed the corpse with a flood of tears, and caused all preparations to be made for carrying it to her monastery at Chelles. Others were very desirous that it should be conveyed to Paris; but the people of Noyon so strenuously opposed it, that the precious remains of their holy pastor were left with them, and the greatest part is kept at Noyon to this day. His body was deposited in the Church of St Lupus of Troyes, out of the walls, soon after called St Eligius's, as St Owen testifies. This monastery of St Eligius is now of the Benedictin Order of the reformed congregation of St Maur. The relics of the saint were afterwards translated into the cathedral. Several other churches lay claim to small portions. St Owen relates many miracles which followed his death, and informs us that the holy abbess St Auræa, who was swept off by a pestilence, with a hundred and sixty of her nuns in 666, was advertised of her last hour some time before it, by a comfortable vision of St Eligius. Queen Bathildes soon after laying aside all ornaments of state gave them all to the poor, except her gold bracelets, of which she caused a cross to be made, which she placed at the head of St Eligius's monument. She also ordered a sort of canopy, called Repa, to be made of gold and silver, and set it over his tomb. The noblemen of her court, imitating her example, offered abundance of gold and precious stones to adorn the same; and as it shone very bright, it was covered in Lent with a linen cloth bordered with silk. A certain liquor which dropped from this linen cloth cured various distempers.<sup>1</sup> Fleury takes notice from this circumstance, that it was the custom at that time to cover, on penitential days, whatever looked bright or shining in churches.

<sup>1</sup> St Andoén, vit. St Eligij, c. 40. See Du Cange in Glessar. v. Repa.

St Eligius learned to be a saint living in the world and in a court. But for this he studied neither to be of the world, nor to be withdrawn by the world from a constant application to religious duties. In the world conversation is a devoir of civility, charity, and friendship; but first it must be sincere, not formality and mere compliment, which is frequently the case. Secondly, conversation with men must not take up a considerable part of our time, nor be a source of vain amusement or unprofitable fooleries. Towards those who would overwhelm us with idle visits we are allowed, and when necessary ought to show, some coolness, in order to break off a frivolous and fruitless commerce. Worldly discourse usually tends to promote vanity, pride, sensuality, and other passions. Men, in general, are not capable of being spoken to in the language of solid truth. Therefore we ought to speak it often to ourselves by holy meditation and reading; and the oftener our circumstances oblige us to listen to the language of the world, so much the more diligent are we bound to be in attending to the voice of truth. St Eligius and many other saints found leisure, even in courts, to converse mostly with heaven and themselves. Who then can plead any excuse?

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 1:*

BLESSED EDMUND CAMPION, S.J., BLESSED RALPH SHERWINE, BLESSED THOMAS FORD, BLESSED WILLIAM FILBY, priests, and seven others, martyrs; ST DIDACUS: ST ELIGIUS, Bishop of Noyon in the seventh age. He was noted for the spirit of humility and of prayer and for his love of poverty: ST NESSAN, Patron of Cork, a disciple of St Finbar, is commemorated by the Irish on this date, as he is also on March 17.

## DECEMBER 2

### ST BIBIANA, VIRGIN, MARTYR (A.D. 363)

[Abridged from her Acts, which are disfigured by interpolations. See Anast. in Simplicio, et Baron. Annot. in Martyr. Rom. Bosius et Aringhi, Roma Subterr. lib. iii. c. 37.]

We are informed by Ammianus Marcellinus, a pagan historian of that age and an officer in the court of Julian the Apostate, that this emperor made Apronianus governor of Rome in the year 363, who, while he was on the way to that city, had the misfortune to lose an eye. This accident he superstitiously imputed to the power of magic, through the malice of some who excelled in that art; and, in this foolish persuasion to gratify his spleen and superstition, he resolved to punish and exterminate the magicians; in which accusation Christians were involved above all others, on account of many wonderful miracles which were wrought in the primitive ages. Under this magistrate, St Bibiana received the crown of martyrdom. This holy virgin was a native of Rome and daughter to Flavian, a Roman knight, and his wife Dafrosa, who were both zealous Christians. Flavian was apprehended, deprived of a considerable post which he held in the

city, burned in the face with a hot iron, and banished to Acquapendente, then called Aquæ Taurinæ, where he died of his wounds a few days after. Dafrosa, by an order of Apronianus, who had thus treated her husband for his constancy in his faith, was on the same account confined to her house for some time; and, at length, carried out of the gates of the city and beheaded. Bibiana and her sister Demetria, after the death of their holy parents, were stripped of all they had in the world, and suffered much from poverty for five months, but spent that time in their own house in fasting and prayer. Apronianus had flattered himself that hunger and want would bring them to a compliance; but seeing himself mistaken, summoned them to appear before him. Demetria, having made a generous confession of her faith, fell down and expired at the foot of the tribunal in the presence of the judge. Apronianus gave orders that Bibiana should be put into the hands of a wicked woman named Rufina, who was extremely artful, and undertook to bring her to another way of thinking. That agent of hell employed all the allurements she could invent; which were afterwards succeeded by blows: but Bibiana, making prayer her shield, remained invincible. Apronianus, enraged at the courage and perseverance of a tender virgin, at length passed sentence of death upon her, and ordered her to be tied to a pillar and whipped with scourges loaded with leaden plummets till she expired. The saint underwent this punishment cheerfully, and died in the hands of the executioners. Her body was left in the open air, that it might be a prey to beasts; but, having lain exposed two days, was buried in the night, near the place of Licinius, by a holy priest called John. Peace being soon after restored to the church, a chapel was erected over her tomb; and, a hundred years after in 465, Pope Simplicius built there a fair church, as Anastasius mentions in his life. This church was called Olympina, from a pious lady of that name, who defrayed the expenses. It was repaired by Honorius III, but being fallen to decay was afterwards united to St Mary Major, till it was sumptuously rebuilt by Urban VIII in 1628, who placed in it the relics of SS. Bibiana, Demetria, and Dafrosa, which were discovered in that place which has been sometimes called St Bibiana's cemetery.

The only affair which a Christian has in this world, and in which consists all his happiness and joy, is to seek God, to attain to the perfect possession of his grace and love, and in all things most perfectly to do his will. By this disposition of heart he is raised above all created things and united to the eternal and unchangeable object of his felicity. He receives the good things of this world with gratitude to the Giver, but always with indifference; leaves them with joy, if God requires that sacrifice at his hands; and, in his abundance, fears not so much the flight of what he possesses as the infection of his own heart, or lest his affections be entangled by them. Such attachments are secretly and imperceptibly contracted,

yet are ties by which the soul is held captive and enslaved to the world. Only assiduous prayer and meditation on heavenly things, habitual self-denial, humble distrust and watchfulness, and abundant almsdeeds proportioned to a person's circumstances, can preserve a soul from this dangerous snare amidst worldly affluence.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 2:*

ST BIBIANA, virgin and martyr (363), daughter to Flavian, a Roman knight, and Dafrosa, both zealous Christians. She was martyred at Rome, under Julian the Apostate: St FINIAN, Bishop of Cluain-iraird (called Clonard) in Meath, 552. Commemorated in Ireland on December 12.

### DECEMBER 3

## ST FRANCIS XAVIER, CONFESSOR, APOSTLE OF THE INDIES

(A.D. 1552)

[His life was written in Latin by F. Turselin, in six books, first printed at Rome in 1594. The same author translated into Latin, and published in 1596, the saint's letters, in four books. The life of this saint was also composed by F. Orlandino in the history of the Society: in Italian, by F. Bartoli; also, by F. Maffei: in Portuguese, by Luzena; and in Spanish, by F. Garcia. See likewise F. Nieremberg's illustrious men: the modern histories of India, especially that of Jarrio; Solia's history of Japan; Lewis de Guzman's Spanish history of the Missions to the East Indies, China, and Japan; and Ferdinand Mendez Pinto's Travels, in Portuguese. From these and other sources is the life of St Francis Xavier elegantly compiled in French by the judicious and eloquent F. Bouhours, published in English by Dryden, in 1688. See also Maffei, Histor. Indicar. lib. xv. F. Ribadeneira; F. Charlevoix, Hist. de Japan. Lafiteau, *Découvertes et Conquêtes des Indes Orientales par les Portugais.*]

A CHARGE to go and preach to all nations was given by Christ to his apostles. This commission the pastors of the church have faithfully executed down to this present time; and in every age have men been raised by God and filled with his Holy Spirit for the discharge of this important function who, being sent by the authority of Christ and his name by those who have succeeded the apostles in the government of his church, have brought new nations to the fold of Christ for the advancement of the divine honour, and filling up the number of the saints. This conversion of nations according to the divine commission is the prerogative of the Catholic Church, in which it has never had any rival. Among those who in the sixteenth century laboured most successfully in this great work, the most illustrious was St Francis Xavier, the Thaumaturgus of these later ages, whom Urban VIII justly styled the Apostle of the Indies. This great saint was born in Navarre, at the castle of Xavier, eight leagues from Pampelona, in 1506. His mother was heiress of the two illustrious houses of Azpilcueta and Xavier, and his father, Don John de Jasso, was one of the chief counsellors of state to John III d'Albret, King of Navarre. Among their numerous family of children, of which Francis was the youngest, those that were elder bore the surname of Azpilcueta, the younger that of Xavier. Francis was instructed in the Latin tongue under domestic masters, and grounded in religious principles in the bosom

of his pious parents. From his infancy he was of a complying, winning humour, and discovered a good genius and a great propensity to learning, to which of his own motion he turned himself, whilst all his brothers embraced the profession of arms. His inclination determined his parents to send him to Paris in the eighteenth year of his age; where he entered the college of St Barbara, and commencing a course of scholastic philosophy, with incessant pains and incredible ardour, surmounted the first difficulties of the crabbed and subtle questions with which the entrance to logic was paved. His faculties were hereby opened, and his penetration and judgment exceedingly improved; and the applause which he received agreeably flattered his vanity, which passion he was not aware of, persuading himself that to raise his fortune in the world was a commendable pursuit. Having studied philosophy for two years he proceeded master of arts; then taught philosophy at Beauvais college, though he still lived in that of St Barbara.

St Ignatius came to Paris in 1528 with a view to finish his studies, and after some time entered himself pensioner in the college of St Barbara. This holy man had conceived a desire of forming a society wholly devoted to the salvation of souls; and being taken with the qualifications of Peter Faber, called in French Le Fevre, a Savoyard, and Francis Xavier, who had been school-fellows, and still lived in the same college, endeavoured to gain their concurrence in this holy project. Faber, who was not enamoured of the world, resigned himself without opposition. But Francis, whose head was full of ambitious thoughts, made a long and vigorous resistance, and bantered and rallied Ignatius on all occasions, ridiculing the meanness and poverty in which he lived as a degenerate lowness of soul. Ignatius repaid his contempt with meekness and kindness, and continued to repeat sometimes to him, "What will it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" This made no impression on one who was dazzled with vainglory and, under pretences, joined false maxims of worldly decency in his idea of Christian virtue. Ignatius assaulting him on the weaker side, often congratulated him for his talents and learning, applauded his lectures and made it his business to procure him scholars; also on a certain occasion when he was in necessity, he furnished him with money. Francis, having a generous soul, was moved with gratitude, and considered that Ignatius was of great birth, and that only the fear of God had inspired him with the choice of the life which he led. He began, therefore, to look on Ignatius with other eyes, and to hearken to his discourses. At that time certain emissaries of the Lutherans secretly scattered their errors among the students at Paris, in so dexterous a manner as to make them appear plausible, and Xavier, who was naturally curious, took pleasure in hearing these novelties, till Ignatius put him upon his guard. Sometime after this, having one day found Xavier more than ordinarily attentive, he repeated to him these words more forcibly than ever, "What will it

profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" and remonstrated that so noble a soul ought not to confine itself to the vain honours of this world, that celestial glory was the only object for his ambition, and that it was against reason not to prefer that which is eternally to last before what vanishes like a dream. Xavier then began to see into the emptiness of earthly greatness, and to find himself powerfully touched with the love of heavenly things. Yet it was not without many serious thoughts and grievous struggles that his soul was overcome by the power of those eternal truths, and he took a resolution of squaring his life entirely by the most perfect maxims of the gospel. For this purpose he gave himself up to the conduct of Ignatius; and the direction of so enlightened a guide made the paths of perfection easy to him. From his new master he learned that the first step in his conversion was to subdue his predominant passion, and that vainglory was his most dangerous enemy. His main endeavours, therefore, were bent from that time to humble himself and confound his pride. And, well knowing that the interior victory over our own heart and its passions is not to be gained without mortifying the flesh and bringing the senses into subjection, he undertook this conquest by hair cloth, fasting, and other austerities.

When the time of the vacancy was come, in 1535, he performed St Ignatius's spiritual exercises; in which such was his fervour that he passed four days without taking any nourishment, and his mind was taken up day and night in the contemplation of heavenly things. By these meditations, which sunk deep into his soul, he was wholly changed into another man, in his desires, affections, and views; so that afterwards he did not know himself, and the humility of the cross appeared to him more amiable than all the glories of this world. In the most profound sentiments of compunction he made a general confession, and formed a design of glorifying God by all possible means, and of employing his whole life for the salvation of souls. The course of philosophy which he read, and which had lasted three years and a half, according to the custom of those times, being completed, by the counsel of Ignatius, he entered on the study of divinity. In 1534, on the feast of the Assumption of our Lady, St Ignatius and his six companions, of whom Francis was one, made a vow at Montmarte to visit the Holy Land and unite their labours for the conversion of the infidels; or, if this should be found not practicable, to cast themselves at the feet of the pope and offer their services wherever he thought fit to employ them. Three others afterwards joined these six, and having ended their studies the year following, these nine companions departed from Paris upon the 15th of November, in 1536, to go to Venice, where St Ignatius had agreed to meet them from Spain. They travelled all through Germany on foot, loaded with their writings, in the midst of winter, which that year was very sharp and cold. Xavier, to overcome his

passions and punish himself for the vanity he had formerly taken in leaping (for he was very active and had been fond of such corporal exercises), in the fervency of his soul had tied his arms and thighs with little cords which, by his travelling, swelled his thighs and sunk so deep into the flesh as to be hardly visible. The saint bore the pain with incredible patience till he fainted on the road; and not being able to go any further was obliged to discover the reason. His companions carried him to the next town, where the surgeon declared that no incision could be safely made deep enough, and that the evil was incurable. In this melancholy situation, Faber, Laynex, and the rest spent that night in prayer; and the next morning Xavier found the cords broken out of the flesh. The holy company joined in actions of thanksgiving to the Almighty, and cheerfully pursued their journey in which Xavier served the rest on all occasions, being always beforehand with them in the duties of charity. They arrived at Venice on the 8th of January 1537, and were much comforted to meet there St Ignatius, by whose direction they divided themselves to serve the poor in two hospitals in that city, whilst they waited for an opportunity to embark for Palestine.

Xavier, who was placed in the hospital of the incurables, employed the day in dressing the sores of the sick, in making their beds, and serving them in meaner offices, and passed whole nights in watching by them. It was his delight chiefly to attend those who were sick of contagious distempers or infected with loathsome ulcers. Two months had passed away in these exercises of charity, when St Ignatius, who stayed behind alone at Venice, sent his companions to Rome to ask the blessing of his holiness Paul III for their intended voyage. The pope granted those among them who were not in holy orders, a licence to receive them at the hands of any Catholic bishop. Upon their return to Venice, Xavier was ordained priest upon St John Baptist's day, in 1537, and they all made vows of chastity and poverty before the pope's nuncio. Xavier retired to a village about four miles from Padua where, to prepare himself for saying his first mass, he spent forty days in a poor, ruined, abandoned cottage, exposed to all the injuries of the weather, lay on the ground, fasted rigorously, and subsisted on what scraps of bread he begged from door to door. St Ignatius having caused all his company to resort to Vicenza, Xavier, after this retreat, repaired thither and said there his first mass with tears flowing in such abundance that his audience could not refrain from mixing their own with his. By order of St Ignatius he applied himself to the exercises of charity and devotion at Bologna, to the great edification of that city. The house in which he there dwelt as a poor man was afterwards given to the society and converted into an oratory of great devotion.

In Lent, in 1538, our saint was called by St Ignatius to Rome, where

the fathers assembled together to deliberate about the foundation of their Order, and their consultations were accompanied by fervent prayers, tears, watchings and penitential austerities, which they practised with a most ardent desire of pleasing our Lord alone, and of seeking in all things his greater glory and the good of souls. After waiting a whole year to find an opportunity of passing into Palestine, and finding execution of that design impracticable on account of the war between the Venetians and the Turks, St Ignatius and his company offered themselves to his holiness to be employed as he should judge most expedient in the service of their neighbour. The pope accepted their offer, and ordered them to preach and instruct in Rome till he should otherwise employ them. St Francis exercised his functions in the Church of St Laurence, in Damaso, in which he appeared so active that no one distinguished himself by a more ardent charity or a more edifying zeal. Govea, a Portuguese, formerly president of the college of St Barbara, at Paris, happened to be then at Rome whither John III, King of Portugal, had sent him on some important business. He had formerly known Ignatius, Xavier, and Faber at Paris, and been a great admirer of their virtue; and he became more so at Rome, insomuch that he wrote to his master that men so learned, humble, charitable, inflamed with zeal, indefatigable in labour, lovers of the cross, and who aimed at nothing but the honour of God, were fit to be sent to plant the faith in the East Indies. The king wrote thereupon to Don Pedro Mascaregnas, his ambassador at Rome, and ordered him to obtain six of these apostolic men for this mission. St Ignatius could grant him only two, and pitched upon Simon Rodriguez, a Portuguese, and Nicholas Bobadilla, a Spaniard. The former went immediately by sea to Lisbon; Bobadilla, who waited to accompany the ambassador, fell sick, and by an overruling supernatural direction, Francis Xavier was substituted in his room on the day before the ambassador began his journey. Our saint received this order with joy, and when he went to ask the benediction of Paul III, there shone, through a profound humility, such a magnanimity of soul that his holiness took from thence a certain presage of the wonderful events which followed. The saint left Rome with the ambassador on the 15th of March 1540, and on the road found perpetual occasion for the most heroic actions of humility, mortification, charity, zeal, and piety, and was always ready to serve his fellow-travellers in the meanest offices, as if he had been everybody's servant. The journey was performed all the way by land, over the Alps and Pyrenees, and took up more than three months. At Pampelona, the ambassador pressed the saint to go to the castle of Xavier, which was but a little distant from the road, to take leave of his mother, who was yet living, and of his other friends, whom he would probably never more see in this world. But the saint would by no means turn out of the road, saying that he deferred the sight of his relations till

he should visit them in heaven; that this transient view would be accompanied with melancholy and sadness, the products of last farewells, whereas their meeting in heaven would be for eternity and without the least alloy of sorrow. This wonderful disengagement from the world exceedingly affected Mascaregnas who, by the saintly example and instructions of the holy man, was converted to a new course of life.

They arrived at Lisbon about the end of June, and Francis went immediately to F. Rodriguez, who was lodged in a hospital, in order to attend and instruct the sick. They made this place their ordinary abode, but catechized and instructed in most parts of the town, and were taken up all Sundays and holidays in hearing confessions at court; for the king and a great number of the courtiers were engaged by their discourses to confess and communicate every week, which they chose to do at their hands. F. Rodriguez was retained by the king at Lisbon, and St Francis was obliged to stay there eight months, while the fleet was getting ready to sail in spring. Dr Martin d'Azpilcueta, commonly called the Doctor of Navarre, who was uncle to Xavier by his mother's side, was then chief professor of divinity at Coimbra, and wrote several letters to our saint, but could not engage him to go to Coimbra. St Francis, when he left Rome, put a memorial in the hands of F. Laynez, in which he declared that he approved the rules that should be drawn up by Ignatius, and consecrated himself to God by the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, in the Society of Jesus, when it should be confirmed as a religious Order by the apostolic see. At Lisbon, before he went on board, the king delivered to him four briefs from the pope; in two of which his holiness constituted Xavier apostolic nuncio, with ample power and authority; in the third he recommended him to David, Emperor of Ethiopia; and in the fourth to other princes in the East. No importunities of the king or his officers could prevail on the saint to accept of any provisions or necessaries, except a few books for the use of converts. Nor would he consent to have a servant, saying that as long as he had the use of his two hands he never would take one. When he was told that it would be unbecoming to see an apostolic legate dressing his own victuals and washing his own linen on the deck, he said he could give no scandal so long as he did no ill. The saint had two companions to the Indies, F. Paul de Camarino, an Italian Jesuit, and Francis Mansilla, a Portuguese, who was not yet in priest's orders.

The saint set sail on the 7th of April in the year 1541, the thirty-sixth year of his age, on board the admiral's vessel, which carried Don Martin Alfonso de Sousa, General-Governor of the Indies, who went with five ships to take possession of his government. The admiral's vessel contained at least a thousand persons, whom Francis considered as committed to his care. He catechized the sailors, preached every Sunday before the main-mast,

took care of the sick, converted his cabin into an infirmary, lay on the deck, and lived on charity during the whole voyage, though the governor was very urgent with him to eat at his table, or accept of a regular supply of food from his kitchen; but he always answered that he was a poor religious man, and that having made a vow of poverty, he was resolved to keep it. He, indeed, received the dishes which the governor sent him from his table, but divided the meat among those who had most need. He composed differences, quelled murmuring, checked swearing and gaming, and took the utmost care to remove all disorders. Bad actions he reproved with so much authority that nobody resisted him, and with so much sweetness and tender love that no one was offended at him. The insufferable colds of Cape Verd, the heats of Guinea, the stench of the fresh waters, and the putrefaction of their flesh provisions under the line, produced pestilential fevers and violent scurries. After five months of perpetual navigation and doubling the Cape of Good Hope, they arrived at Mozambique, on the eastern coast of Africa, about the end of August, and there they wintered. The inhabitants are mostly Mohammedans and trade with the Arabs and Ethiopians; but the Portuguese have settlements among them. The air is very unwholesome, and Xavier himself fell sick there, but was almost recovered when the admiral again put to sea in a fresh vessel which made better sail, on the 15th of March in 1542. In three days they arrived at Melinda, a town of the Saracens, in Africa. Leaving this place, after a few days' sail they touched at the isle of Socotra, over against the strait of Mecca. Thence, crossing the sea of Arabia and India, they landed at Goa on the 6th of May, in 1542, in the thirteenth month from their setting out from Lisbon.

After St Francis was landed he went immediately to the hospital, and there took his lodging; but would not enter upon his missionary functions till he had paid his respects to the Bishop of Goa, whose name was John d'Albuquerque, and who was a most virtuous prelate. The saint presented to him the briefs of Paul III, declared that he pretended not to use them without his approbation, and casting himself at his feet, begged his blessing. The bishop was struck with the venerable air of sanctity that appeared in his countenance and deportment, raised him up, kissed the briefs, and promised to support him by his episcopal authority, which he failed not to do. To call down the blessing of heaven on his labours, St Francis consecrated most of the night to prayer. The situation in which religion then was in those parts was such as called forth his zeal and his tears. Among the Portuguese, revenge, ambition, avarice, usury, and debauchery seemed to have extinguished in many the sentiments of their holy religion; the sacraments were neglected; there were not four preachers in all the Indies; nor any priests without the walls of Goa. The infideis resembled rather beasts than men, and the few who were come over to the faith not

being supported by competent instructions, nor edified by example, relapsed into their ancient manners and superstitions. Such was the deplorable situation of those countries when St Francis Xavier appeared among them as a new star to enlighten so many infidel nations. So powerful was the word of God in his mouth, and such the fruit of his zeal, that in the space of ten years he established the empire of Jesus Christ in a new world. Nothing more sensibly afflicted him on his arrival at Goa, than the scandalous deportment of the Christians, who lived in direct opposition to the Gospel which they professed and, by their manners alienated the infidels from the faith; he therefore thought it would be best to open his mission with them. In order to compass a general reformation, he began by instructing them in the principles of religion, and forming the youth to the practice of sincere piety. Having spent the morning in assisting and comforting the distressed in the hospitals and prisons, he walked through all the streets of Goa, with a bell in his hand, summoning all masters, for the love of God, to send their children and slaves to catechism. The little children gathered together in crowds about him, and he led them to the church and taught them the creed and practices of devotion, and impressed on their tender minds strong sentiments of piety and religion. By the modesty and devotion of the youth, the whole town began to change its face and the most abandoned sinners began to blush at vice. After some time, the saint preached in public and made his visits to private houses; and the sweetness of his behaviour and words, and his charitable concern for the souls of his neighbours were irresistible. Sinners were struck with the horror of their crimes; usurious bonds were cancelled, restitution was made of unjust gains, slaves who had been unjustly acquired were set at liberty, concubines dismissed or lawfully married, and families were well regulated.

The reformation of the whole city of Goa was accomplished in half a year, when the saint was informed that, on the coast of La Pescaria, or the Pearl Fishery, which is extended from Cape Comorin to the isle of Manar, on the eastern side of the peninsula, there were certain people called Paravas, that is, fishers, who some time ago, in order to please the Portuguese who had succoured them against the Moors, had caused themselves to be baptized, but for want of instructions retained their superstitions and vices. Xavier had by this time got a little acquaintance with the Malabar language, which is spoken on that coast, and taking with him two young ecclesiastics who understood it competently well, embarked in October, in 1542, and sailed to Cape Comorin, which faces the isle of Ceylon and is about six hundred miles from Goa. Here St Francis went into a village full of idolaters and preached Jesus Christ to them, but the inhabitants told him they could not change their religion without the leave of their lord. Their obstinacy, however, yielded to the force of miracles

by which God was pleased to manifest his truth to them. A woman who had been three days in the pains of childbirth, without being eased by any remedies or prayers of the Brahmins, was immediately delivered and recovered upon being instructed in the faith and baptized by St Francis, as he himself relates in a letter to St Ignatius.<sup>1</sup> Upon this miracle not only that family, but most of the chief persons of the country listened to his doctrine, and heartily embraced the faith, having obtained the leave of their prince. The servant of God proceeded to the Pearl Coast, set himself first to instruct and confirm those who had been formerly baptized; and, to succeed in this undertaking, he was at some pains to make himself more perfectly master of the Malabar tongue. Then he preached to those Paravas to whom the name of Christ was till that time unknown; and so great were the multitudes which he baptized, that sometimes by the bare fatigue of administering that sacrament, he was scarce able to move his arm, according to the account which he gave to his brethren in Europe. To make the children comprehend and retain the catechism, he taught them to recite with him some little prayer upon each question or article. Every lesson or instruction he began with the "Our Father," and ended with the "Hail, Mary." Diseases seem to have been never so frequent on that coast as at that time; the people had almost all recourse to St Francis for their cure, or that of some friend; and great numbers recovered their health, either by being baptized or by invoking the name of Jesus. The saint frequently sent some young neophyte with his crucifix, beads, or reliquary to touch the sick, after having recited with them the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Commandments; and the sick, by declaring unfeignedly that they believed in Christ and desired to be baptized, recovered their health. The process of the saint's canonization makes mention of four dead persons to whom God restored life at this time by the ministry of his servant. The first was a catechist who had been stung by a serpent of that kind whose stings are always mortal. The second was a child who was drowned in a pit. The third and fourth a young man and maid whom a pestilential fever had carried off. Incredible were the labours of the saint. His food was the same as that of the poorest people, rice and water. His sleep was but three hours a night at most, and that in a fisher's cabin on the ground. The remainder of the night he passed with God or with his neighbour. In the midst of the hurry of his external employments, he ceased not to converse interiorly with God, who bestowed on him such an excess of interior spiritual delights that he was often obliged to desire the divine goodness to moderate them; as he testified in a letter to St Ignatius and his brethren at Rome, though written in general terms and in the third person. "I am accustomed," says he,<sup>2</sup> "often to hear one labouring in this vineyard cry out to God: O my Lord, give me not so much joy and

<sup>1</sup> St Fr. Xavier, lib. i. Ep. 4, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 5, p. 80, Societati Romam.

comfort in this life; or, if by an excess of mercy, thou wilt heap it upon me, take me to thyself and make me partaker of thy glory. For he who has once in his interior feeling tasted thy sweetness, must necessarily find life too bitter so long as he is deprived of the sight of Thee."

He had laboured about fifteen months in the conversion of the Paravas when, toward the close of the year 1543, he was obliged to return to Goa to procure assistants. The seminary of the faith which had been founded there for the education of young Indians, was committed to his care and put into the hands of the Society. The following year he returned to the Paravas with a supply of evangelical labourers, Indians as well as Europeans, whom he stationed in different towns; and some he carried with him into the kingdom of Travancore where, as he testifies in one of his letters, he baptized ten thousand Indians with his own hand in one month, and sometimes a whole village received the sacrament of regeneration in one day. When the holy man first penetrated into the inland provinces of the Indians, being wholly ignorant of the language of the people, he could only baptize children and serve the sick, who, by signs, could signify what they wanted, as he wrote to F. Mansilla. Whilst he exercised his zeal in Travancore, God first communicated to him the gift of tongues, according to the relation of a young Portuguese of Coimbra, named Vaz, who attended him on many of his journeys. He spoke very well the language of those barbarians without having learned it, and had no need of an interpreter when he instructed them. He sometimes preached to five or six thousand persons together in some spacious plain. The saint narrowly escaped the snares which were sometimes laid by Brahmins and others to take away his life; and when the Badages, a tribe of savages and public robbers, having plundered many other places, made inroads into Travancore, he marched up to the enemy with a crucifix in his hand, at the head of a small troop of fervent Christians and, with a commanding air, bade them, in the name of the living God, not to pass further, but to return the way they came. His words cast such a terror into the minds of the leaders who were at the head of the barbarians, that they stood some time confounded and without motion; then retired in disorder and quitted the country. This action procured St Francis the protection of the King of Travancore and the surname of the Great Father. As the saint was preaching one day at Coulon, a village in Travancore near Cape Comorin, perceiving that few were converted by his discourse, he made a short prayer that God would honour the blood and name of his beloved Son by softening the hearts of the most obdurate. Then he bade some of the people open the grave of a man who was buried the day before, near the place where he preached; and the body was beginning to putrefy with a noisome scent, which he desired the bystanders to observe. Then falling on his knees, after a short prayer, he commanded the dead man in the name of the living God to arise. At

these words the dead man arose and appeared not only living but vigorous and in perfect health. All who were present were so struck with this evidence that, throwing themselves at the saint's feet, they demanded baptism. The holy man also raised to life, on the same coast, a young man who was a Christian, whose corpse he met as it was being carried to the grave. To preserve the memory of this wonderful action the parents of the deceased, who were present, erected a great cross on the place where the miracle was wrought. These miracles made so great impressions on the people, that the whole kingdom of Travancore was subjected to Christ in a few months, except the king and some of his courtiers.

The reputation of the miracles of St Francis reached the isle of Manar, which sent deputies to St Francis entreating him to visit their country. The saint could not at that time leave Travancore, but sent a zealous missionary by whom many were instructed and baptized. The King of Jafanatapan, in the northern part of the neighbouring beautiful and pleasant isle of Ceylon, hearing of this progress of the faith, fell upon Manar with an army and slew six or seven hundred Christians who, when asked the question, boldly confessed Christ. This tyrant was afterwards slain by the Portuguese, when they invaded Ceylon. The saint, after he had made a journey to Cochin upon business, visited Manar, and settled there a numerous church; in a journey of devotion, which he took to Meliapor to implore the intercession of the Apostle St Thomas, he converted many dissolute livers in that place. Afterwards, intending to pass to the island of Macassar, he sailed to Malacca, a famous mart in the peninsula beyond the Ganges, to which all the Indies and also the Arabs, Persians, Chinese, and Japonians, resorted for trade. The saint arrived here on the 25th of September 1545 and, by the irresistible force of his zeal and miracles, reformed the debauched manners of the Christians, and converted many pagans and Mohammedans. St Francis, finding no opportunity of sailing to Macassar, passed the isles of Bonda, which are some of the Spice Islands. Landing in the island of Amboina, he baptized a great part of the inhabitants. Having preached in other islands, he made a considerable stay in the Moluccas, and, though the inhabitants were an untractable people, he brought great numbers to the truth. Thence he passed to the Isle del Moro, the inhabitants of which he gained to Christ. In this mission he suffered much; but from it wrote to St Ignatius, "The dangers to which I am exposed and pains I take for the interest of God alone, are the inexhaustible springs of spiritual joys; insomuch, that these islands, bare of all worldly necessaries, are the places in the world for a man to lose his sight with the excess of weeping; but they are tears of joy. I remember not ever to have tasted such interior delights; and these consolations of the soul are so pure, so exquisite, and so constant, that they take from me all sense of my corporal sufferings." The saint, returning towards Goa,

visited the islands on the road where he had preached, and arrived at Malacca in 1547. In the beginning of the year 1548 he landed in Ceylon, where he converted great numbers, with two kings.

At Malacca, a Japanese named Angeroo, addressed himself to the saint. Kaempfer tells us that he had killed a man in his own country and, to save his life, made his escape in a Portuguese ship. All agree that he was rich and of a noble extraction, and about thirty-five years of age; and, that being disturbed in mind, with remorse and terrors of conscience, he was advised by certain Christians to have recourse to the holy St Francis for comfort. The saint poured the mildest balm into his wounded heart and gave him assurances that he should find repose of mind, but must first seek God in his true religion. The Japanese was charmed with his discourses, and as he had by that time acquired some knowledge of the Portuguese language, was instructed in the faith and engaged by St Francis to embark with his attendants and go to Goa, whither he himself was directing his course, but taking a round. In the straits of Ceylon the ship which carried the saint was overtaken with a most dreadful tempest, insomuch that the sailors threw all their merchandise overboard, and the pilot, not being able to hold the rudder, abandoned the vessel to the fury of the waves. For three days and three nights the mariners had nothing but death before their eyes. St Francis, after hearing the confessions of all on board, fell on his knees before his crucifix and continued there, wholly taken up and lost to all things but to God. The ship at last struck against the sands of Ceylon, and the mariners gave themselves up for lost, when Xavier, coming out of his cabin, took the line and plummet, as if it had been to fathom the sea and, letting them down to the bottom of the water, pronounced these words, "Great God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have mercy on us." At the same moment the vessel stopped and the wind ceased. After which they pursued their voyage, and happily arrived at Cochin on the 21st of January 1548.

The saint, leaving Cochin, visited the villages of the coast of the Pearl Fishery, and was much edified with the fervour of the converts; he made some stay at Manapar, near Cape Comorin, passed over to the isle of Ceylon, where he converted the King of Cande, and arrived at Goa on the 20th of March 1548. There he instructed Angeroo and many others, and took a resolution to go to Japan. In the meantime, he applied himself more than ever to the exercises of an interior life, as it were to recover new strength; for it is the custom of all apostolical men, by the communications which they have with God, to refresh themselves and repair their interior spirit amidst the pains which they take with their neighbour. During this retirement in the garden of St Paul's college, sometimes walking, at other times in a little hermitage which was there set up, he cried out, "It is enough, my Lord; it is enough." And he sometimes opened his cassock before

his breast, declaring he was not able to support the abundance of heavenly consolations. At the same time he signified that he rather prayed that God would reserve those pleasures for another time, and here would not spare to inflict on him any pains or sufferings in this present world. F. Gaspar Barzia and four other Jesuits, arrived at that time at Goa from Europe, whom the saint stationed, and then set out for Malacca, intending to proceed to Japan. After a short stay at Malacca, he went on board a Chinese vessel and arrived at Cangoxima, in the kingdom of Saxuma, in Japan, on the 15th of August 1549, having with him Angeroo, who had been baptized with two of his domestics at Goa, and was called Paul of the holy faith.

The language of the Japanese seems, in the judgment of Kaempfer, to be a primitive or original tongue. St Francis learned certain elements of it from his convert during his voyage, and stayed forty days at Cangoxima, lodging at Paul's house, whose wife, daughter, and other relations he in the meantime converted and baptized. The same language is used all over the empire, but the words are differently accented when addressed to courtiers or persons of rank, and when to merchants and soldiers, and again differently to the vulgar. During these forty days, St Francis, by unwearied application made such progress in it as to translate into Japanese the apostle's creed and an exposition of it, which he had composed, and which he got by heart in this language, and then began to preach; but was first introduced by Paul to the King of Saxuma, whose residence was six leagues from Cangoxima.

After a year spent at Cangoxima with his usual success, the saint in 1550 went to Firando, the capital of another petty kingdom; for the King of Saxuma, incensed at the Portuguese because they had abandoned his port to carry on their trade chiefly at Firando, had withdrawn the licence he had granted the saint, and began to persecute the Christians. The converts, however, persevered steady, and declared they were ready to suffer banishment or death rather than deny Christ; and St Francis recommended them to Paul, and left in their hands an ample exposition of the creed and the life of our Saviour translated entire from the Gospels, which he had caused to be printed in Japanese characters. He took with him his two companions, who were Jesuits, and carried on his back, according to his custom, all the necessary utensils for the sacrifice of the mass. The saint, on his way to Firando, preached in the fortress of Ekandono, the prince of which was a vassal to the King of Saxuma. The prince's steward embraced the faith with several others, and to his care Xavier recommended the rest at his departure; and he assembled them daily in his apartments to recite with them the litany and prayers and, on Sundays, read to them the Christian doctrine: and so edifying was the behaviour of these Christians, that many others desired to join them after

the departure of their apostle; and the King of Saxuma, moved by their edifying conduct, became again the protector of our holy religion. At Firando, Xavier baptized more infidels in twenty days than he had done at Cangoxima in a whole year. These converts he left under the care of one of the Jesuits that accompanied him, and set out for Meaco with one Jesuit and two Japanese Christians. They went by sea to Facata, and from thence embarked for Amanguchi, the capital of the kingdom of Naugato, famous for the richest silver mines in Japan. Our saint preached here in public, and before the king and his court; but the Gospel at that time took no root in this debauched city, the number which the saint gained there being inconsiderable, though a single soul is, indeed, a great acquisition.

Xavier, having made above a month's abode at Amanguchi and gathered small fruit of his labours except affronts, continued his journey towards Meaco with his three companions. It was towards the end of December, and the four servants of God suffered much on the road from heavy rains, great drifts of snow, pinching cold, torrents, and hideous mountains and forests; and they travelled barefoot. In passing through towns and villages, Xavier was accustomed to read some part of his catechism to the people and to preach. Not finding a proper word in the Japanese language to express the sovereign Deity, and fearing lest the idolaters should confound God with some of their idols, he told them that never having had any knowledge of the true infinite God, they were not able to express his name, but that the Portuguese called him Deos; and this word he repeated with so much action and such a tone of voice, that he made even the pagans sensible what veneration is due to that sacred name. In two several towns he narrowly escaped being stoned for speaking against the gods of the country. He arrived at Meaco, with his companions, in February 1551. The Dairi, Cubosama, and Saso (or high priest) then kept their court there; but the saint could not procure an audience even of the Saso without paying for that honour a hundred thousand caixes, which amount to six hundred French crowns, a sum which he had not to give. A civil war, kindled against the Cubosama, filled the city with such tumults and alarms that Xavier saw it to be impossible to do any good there at that time, and after a fortnight's stay returned to Amanguchi. Perceiving that he was rejected at court upon the account of his mean appearance, he bought a rich suit and hired two or three servants; and in this equipage waited on the king, to whom he made a present of a little striking-clock and some other things. Thus he obtained his protection, and preached with such fruit that he baptized three thousand persons in that city, with whom he left two Jesuits who were his companions, to give the finishing to their instruction. At Amanguchi Ged restored to St Francis the gift of tongues; for he preached often to the Chinese merchants who traded there in their mother-tongue, which he had never learned.

St Francis, recommending the new Christians here to two fathers whom he left behind, left Amanguchi toward the middle of September, in 1551, and, with two Japanese Christians who had suffered with joy the confiscation of their goods for changing their religion, travelled on foot to Fuceo, the residence of the King of Bungo, who was very desirous to see him, and gave him a most gracious reception. Here the saint publicly confuted the Bonzas who, upon motives of interest, everywhere strenuously opposed his preaching, though even among them some were converted. The saint's public sermons and private conversations had their due effect among the people, and vast multitudes desired to be instructed and baptized. Among others the king himself was convinced of the truth, and renounced those impurities which are abhorred by nature, but remained still wedded to some sensual pleasures, on which account he could not be admitted to the sacrament of regeneration till, after some succeeding years, having made more serious reflections on the admonitions of the saint, he reformed his life altogether and was baptized. Our saint took leave of this king and embarked to return to India on the 20th of November 1551, having continued in Japan two years and four months. To cultivate this growing mission he sent thither three Jesuits, who were shortly followed by others. It had been often objected to him that the learned and wise men in China had not embraced the faith of Christ. This circumstance first inspired him with an earnest desire that the name of Christ might be glorified in that flourishing empire; and, full of a zealous project of undertaking that great enterprise, he left Japan. In this voyage the ship in which he sailed was rescued from imminent danger of shipwreck in a storm by his prayers; and a shallop, in which were fifteen persons belonging to the ship from which it had been separated by the same tempest, was saved by the same means, according to his confident and repeated prediction, the passengers and mariners in it seeming all the way to have seen Xavier sitting at the helm and steering it. Many other clear predictions of the saint are recorded. At Malacca he was received with the greatest joy that can be imagined, and he immediately set himself to contrive how he might compass his intended journey to China. The greatest difficulty was, that besides the ill-understanding which was betwixt China and Portugal, it was forbidden to strangers on pain of death, or of perpetual imprisonment, to set foot in that kingdom. To remove this obstacle St Francis discoursed with the old governor of Malacca, Don Pedro de Sylva, and with the new one, Don Alvarez d'Atayda, and it was agreed that an embassy might be sent in the name of the King of Portugal to China to settle a commerce, with which the saint might with safety land in that kingdom. In the meantime the saint set out for Goa.

Xavier reached Goa in the beginning of February, and having paid a visit to the hospitals, went to the College of St Paul where he cured a dying

man. The missionaries whom he had dispersed before his departure, had spread the gospel on every side. F. Gaspar Barzia had converted almost the whole city and island of Ormuz. Christianity flourished exceedingly on the coast of the pearl fishery, and had made great progress at Cochin, Coulan, Bazain, Meliapor, in the Moluccas, the isles of Moro, &c. The King of Tanor, whose dominions lay on the coast of Malabar, had been baptized at Goa. The King of Trichenamalo, one of the sovereigns of Ceylon, also embraced the faith. The progress of the faith in many other places was such as gave the greatest subject of joy to the holy man. But F. Antonio Gomez, a great preacher and scholar, whom the saint had appointed rector at Goa, had made such changes and innovations, even in the domestic discipline of the Society, that the saint was obliged to dismiss him from the Order. Xavier appointed F. Barzia, a person of eminent piety, rector of Goa and vice-provincial, sent new preachers into all the missions on this side the Ganges, and obtained of the viceroy, Don Alphonso de Norogna, a commission for his good friend, James Pereya, to go on an embassy to China. Having settled all affairs at Goa, he made the most tender and ardent exhortations to his religious brethren, then leaving F. Barzia, vice-provincial, set sail on the 14th of April in 1552, and landing at Malacca, found the town afflicted with a most contagious pestilential fever. This he had foretold before he arrived; and no sooner was he come on shore, but running from street to street he carried the poor that lay languishing up and down to the hospitals, and attended them with his companions. At that time he restored to life a young man named Francis Ciavos, who afterwards took the habit of the Society. When the mortality had almost ceased, the saint treated about the embassy to China with the Governor of Malacca, on whom Don Alphonso de Norogna (the fifth Viceroy and seventeenth Governor of the Indies) had reposed the trust of that affair. Don Alvarez d'Atayda Gama had lately succeeded his good brother, Don Pedro de Silva Gama, in the government of Malacca. This officer, out of a pique to Pereya, crossed the project of the embassy and, when St Francis urged the authority of the king and the command of the viceroy, Alvarez flew into a rage and treated him with the most injurious language. The saint ceased not for a whole month to solicit the governor, and at length threatened him with excommunication in case he persisted thus to oppose the propagation of the gospel. Upon this occasion the saint produced the briefs of Paul III, by which he was appointed apostolic nuncio, which, out of humility, he had kept a profound secret during ten years that were expired since his coming to the Indies. The governor continued to laugh at the threats, so that the bishop's grand vicar at length fulminated an excommunication against him in the name of Xavier who, seeing this design utterly destroyed, determined to go on board of a Portuguese ship that was setting sail for the isle of Sancian, a small barren

island near Macao, on the coast of China. This governor was afterwards deposed for extortions and other crimes, by an order of the king, and sent in chains to Goa. St Francis during this voyage wrought several miracles and converted certain Mohammedan passengers, and on the twenty-third day after the ship's departure from Malacca, arrived at Sancian, where the Chinese permitted the Portuguese to come and buy their commodities. When the project of the embassy had failed, St Francis had sent the three Jesuits he had taken for his companions into Japan, and retained with him only a brother of the Society (who was a Chinese and had taken the habit of Goa) and a young Indian. He hoped to find means with only two companions to land secretly in China. The merchants at Sancian endeavoured to persuade him that his design was impracticable, all setting before his eyes the rigorous laws of the government of China, that all the ports were narrowly guarded by vigilant officers, who were neither to be circumvented nor bribed, and that the least he could expect was scourging and perpetual imprisonment. The saint was not to be deterred; and answered all these and many other reasons saying, that to be terrified by such difficulties from undertaking the work of God would be incomparably worse than all the evils with which they threatened him. He therefore took his measures for the voyage of China, and first of all provided himself with a good interpreter; for the Chinese he had brought with him from Goa was wholly ignorant of the language which is spoken at the court, and had almost forgotten the common idiom of the vulgar. Then the saint hired a Chinese merchant called Capoeca, to land him by night on some part of the coast where no houses were in view; for which service Xavier engaged to pay him two hundred pardos, and bound himself by oath that no torments should ever bring him to confess either the name or house of him who had set him on shore.

The Portuguese at Sancian, fearing this attempt might be revenged by the Chinese on them, endeavoured to traverse the design. Whilst the voyage was deferred Xavier fell sick, and when the Portuguese vessels were all gone except one, was reduced to extreme want of all necessaries. Also, the Chinese interpreter whom he had hired recalled his word. Yet the servant of God, who soon recovered of his illness, did not lose courage; and hearing that the King of Siam was preparing a magnificent embassy to the Emperor of China, he resolved to use his best endeavours to obtain leave to accompany the ambassador of Siam. But God was pleased to accept his will in this good work and took him to himself. A fever seized the saint a second time on the 20th of November, and at the same time he had a clear knowledge of the day and hour of his death, which he openly declared to a friend, who afterwards made an authentic deposition of it by a solemn oath. From that moment he perceived in himself a strange disgust of all earthly things, and thought on nothing but that celestial country

whither God was calling him. Being much weakened by his fever, he retired into the vessel which was the common hospital of the sick, that he might die in poverty. But the tossing of the ship giving him an extraordinary headache, and hindering him from applying himself to God as he desired, the day following he requested that he might be set on shore again, which was done. He was exposed on the sands to a piercing north wind; till George Alvarez, out of compassion, caused him to be carried into his cabin, which afforded a very poor shelter, being open on every side. The saint's distemper, accompanied with an acute pain in his side and a great oppression, increased daily; he was twice bled, but the unskilful surgeon both times pricked the tendon, by which accident the patient fell into swooning convulsions. His disease was attended with a horrible nauseousness, insomuch that he could take no nourishment. But his countenance was always serene and his soul enjoyed a perpetual calm. Sometimes he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and at other times fixed them on his crucifix, entertaining divine conversations with his God in which he shed abundance of tears. At last, on the 2nd of December which fell on Friday, having his eyes all bathed in tears and fixed with great tenderness of soul upon his crucifix, he pronounced these words, "In thee, O Lord, I have hoped; I shall not be confounded for ever"; and, at the same instant, transported with celestial joy which appeared upon his countenance, he sweetly gave up the ghost in 1552. Though he was only forty-six years old, of which he had passed ten and a half in the Indies, his continual labours had made him grey betimes, and in the last year of his life he was grizzled almost to whiteness. His corpse was interred on Sunday, being laid after the Chinese fashion, in a large chest, which was filled up with unslack'd lime, to the end that the flesh being consumed, the bones might be carried to Goa. On the 17th of February, in 1553, the grave was opened to see if the flesh was consumed; but the lime being taken off the face, it was found ruddy and fresh coloured like that of a man who is in a sweet repose. The body was in like manner whole, and the natural moisture uncorrupted; and the flesh being a little cut in the thigh near the knee, the blood was seen to run from the wound. The sacerdotal habits in which the saint was buried were in no way endamaged by the lime; and the holy corpse exhalea an odour so fragrant and delightful that the most exquisite perfumes came nothing near it. The sacred remains were carried into the ship and brought to Malacca on the 22nd of March, where it was received with great honour. The pestilence which for some weeks had laid waste the town, on a sudden ceased. The body was interred in a damp churchyard; yet in August was found entire, fresh, and still exhaling a sweet odour, and being honourably put into a ship, was translated to Goa, where it was received and placed in the church in the college of St Paul on the 15th of March, in 1554; upon which occasion several blind

persons recovered their sight and others, sick of palsies and other diseases, their health, and the use of their limbs. By order of King John III a verbal process of the life and miracles of the man of God was made with the utmost accuracy at Goa and in other parts of the Indies. Many miracles were wrought, through his intercession, in several parts of the Indies and Europe, confessed by several Protestants; and Tavernier calls him the St Paul and the true apostle of the Indies. St Francis was beatified by Paul V in 1554, and canonized by Gregory XV in 1662. By an order of John V, King of Portugal, the Archbishop of Goa, attended by the viceroy, the Marquis of Castle Nuovo, in 1744, performed a visitation of the relics of St Francis Xavier; at which time the body was found without the least bad smell and seemed environed with a kind of shining brightness; and the face, hands, breast, and feet had not suffered the least alteration or symptom of corruption.<sup>1</sup> In 1747 the same king obtained a brief of Benedict XIV, by which St Francis Xavier is honoured with the title of patron and protector of all the countries in the East Indies.

Holy zeal may properly be said to have formed the character of St Francis Xavier. Consumed with an insatiable thirst of the salvation of souls and of the dilatation of the honour and kingdom of Christ on earth, he ceased not with tears and prayers to conjure the Father of all men not to suffer those to perish whom he had created in his own divine image, made capable of knowing and loving him, and redeemed with the adorable blood of his Son; as is set forth in the excellent prayer of this saint, printed in many books of devotion. For this end the saint, like another St Paul, made himself all to all, and looked upon all fatigues, sufferings, and dangers, as his pleasure and gain. In transports of zeal he invited and pressed others to labour in the conversion of infidels and sinners. In one of his letters to Europe, he wrote as follows:<sup>2</sup> “ I have often thoughts to run over all the universities of Europe, and principally that of Paris, and to cry aloud to those who abound more in learning than in charity, ‘ Ah! how many souls are lost to heaven through your neglect! ’ Many, without doubt, would be moved, would make a spiritual retreat and give themselves the leisure for meditating on heavenly things. They would renounce their passions and, trampling under foot all worldly vanities, would put themselves in a condition of following the motions of the divine will. Then they would say, Behold me in readiness, O Lord. How much more happily would these learned men then live! With how much more assurance would they die! Millions of idolaters might be easily converted if there were more preachers who would sincerely mind the interests of Jesus Christ and not their own.” But the saint required missionaries that are prudent, charitable,

<sup>1</sup> Lettres Edif. et Cur. des Mission. vol. xxvii. Pref. p. 24.  
<sup>2</sup> St Fr. Xav. Ep. 5, from Cochin, anno 1544, p. 67.

mild, perfectly disinterested, and of so great purity of manners, that no occasions of sin weaken their constancy.<sup>1</sup> This saint was himself a model of such preachers, formed upon the spirit of the apostles. So absolute a master he was of his passions that he knew not what it was to have the least motion of choler and impatience, and in all events was perfectly resigned to the divine will; from whence proceeded an admirable tranquillity of soul, a perpetual cheerfulness, and equality of countenance. He rejoiced in afflictions and sufferings, and said that one who had once experienced the sweetness of suffering for Christ, will ever after find it worse than death to live without a cross.<sup>2</sup> By humility the saint was always ready to follow the advice of others, and attributed all blessings to their prayers which he most earnestly implored.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 3 :*

ST BIRINUS, first Bishop of Dorchester in the seventh century : ST FRANCIS XAVIER, Apostle of the Indies, one of the companions of St Ignatius and one of the greatest missionaries of all time. With a few loyal Christians he once marched up to a tribe of savage public robbers, holding only a crucifix, and bade them go back the way they came (which they did) : ST LUCIUS, King, a British saint in the second age : and ST SOLA, hermit.

#### DECEMBER 4

#### ST BARBARA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR

THIS holy virgin and martyr is honoured with particular devotion in the Latin, Greek, Muscovite, and Syriac calendars, but her history is obscured by a variety of false acts. Baronius prefers those who tell us that she was a scholar of Origen and suffered martyrdom at Nicomedia, in the reign of Maximinus the First, who raised the sixth general persecution after the murder of Alexander Severus in 235. But Joseph Assemani shows the acts which we have in Metaphrastes and Mombritius to be the most exact and sincere. By these we are informed that St Barbara suffered at Heliopolis, in Egypt, in the reign of Galerius, about the year 306. This account agrees with the Emperor Basil's Menology and the Greek Synaxary. Her name was given to an old monastery near Edessa, a city of Mesopotamia, famous as the residence of Abgarus, a monarch to whom our Saviour is reported to have written a letter, numerous copies of which still exist. See Jos. Assemani in *Calend. Univ. t. v. p. 408.*

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 4 :*

ST ANNO, Bishop : ST BARBARA, virgin and martyr, greatly honoured in the Latin, Greek and Syriac calendars. She was said to have been a scholar of Origen and to have suffered at Nicomedia. But other authorities say she met her death in Egypt, about 306 : ST PETER CHRYSOGONUS, Archbishop of Ravenna and Doctor of the Church, 450. His name signifies "golden speech" : ST OSMUND, Bishop of Salisbury, 1099 : ST SIRAN, Abbot, in the seventh century.

<sup>1</sup> St Fr. Xav. lib. ii. Ep. 9. See *Lett. Edif. et Curi. des Mission. Reçues*, lib. vii. p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Id. lib. i. Ep. 1, p. 25.

DECEMBER 5

## ST SABAS, ABBOT

(A.D. 532)

[From his life, excellently written by Cyril, monk of Palestine, in 557, author of the life of St John the Silent, of that of St Euthymius, and of this of St Sabas, which is correctly published by Bollandus, January 20, and in Greek by Cotelierius Monum. Gr. t. iii. pp. 220, 574. These Acts in Metaphrastes are adulterated by certain counterfeit additions. See Assemani, t. v. p. 410.]

ST SABAS, one of the most renowned patriarchs of the monks of Palestine, was born at Mutalasca, in Cappadocia, not far from Cæsarea the capital, in 439. The name of his father was John, that of his mother, Sophia; both were pious and of illustrious families. The father was an officer in the army and being obliged to go to Alexandria, in Egypt, took his wife with him, and recommended his son Sabas, with the care of his estate, to Hermias, the brother of his wife. This uncle's wife used the child so harshly that, three years after, he went to an uncle called Gregory, brother to his father, hoping there to live in peace. Gregory having the care of the child, demanded also the administration of his estate, whence great lawsuits and animosities arose between the two uncles. Sabas, who was of a mild disposition, took great offence at these discords about so contemptible a thing as earthly riches and, the grace of God working powerfully in his heart, he resolved to renounce for ever what was a source of so great evils among men. He retired to a monastery called Flavinia, three miles from Mutalasca, and the abbot received him with open arms and took great care to see him instructed in the science of the saints and in the rules of a monastic profession. His uncles, blinded by avarice and mutual animosity, were some years without opening their eyes; but at last, ashamed of their conduct towards a nephew, they agreed together to take him out of his monastery, restore him his estate, and persuade him to marry. In vain they employed all means to gain their point. Sabas had tasted the bitterness of the world and the sweetness of the yoke of Christ, and his heart was so united to God that nothing could draw him from his good purpose. He applied himself with great fervour to the practice of all virtues, especially humility, mortification, and prayer, as the means to attain all others. One day, whilst he was at work in the garden, he saw a tree loaded with fair and beautiful apples, and gathered one with an intention to eat it. But reflecting that this was a temptation of the devil, he threw the apple on the ground and trod upon it. Moreover, to punish himself, and more perfectly to overcome the enemy, he made a vow never to eat any apples as long as he lived. By this victory over himself he made great progress in all other virtues, exercising himself by day in labour accompanied with prayer, and by night in watching in devotions, always flying idleness as the root of all evils, sleeping only as much as was absolutely necessary to support nature and

never interrupting his labours but to lift up his hands to God. Though he was the youngest in the house he soon surpassed all the rest in fervour and virtue. So tender was his charity and compassion that once when he was serving the baker, who had put his wet clothes into the oven to dry and, forgetting them, had put in fire, seeing him much troubled for his clothes, he went into the oven and fetched them out through the flames without hurt. When Sabas had been ten years in this monastery, being eighteen years old, with the leave of his abbot he went to Jerusalem to visit the holy places, and to edify himself by the examples of the eminent solitaries of that country. He passed the winter in the monastery of Passarion, governed at that time by the holy Abbot Elpidius. All the brethren were charmed with his virtue and desired earnestly that he would fix his abode among them; but his great love of silence and retirement made him prefer the manner of life practised by St Euthymius. He cast himself at the feet of that holy abbot, conjuring him with many tears to receive him among his disciples. St Euthymius judged him too young to continue in his laura with the anchorites; so extreme a solitude being only proper for the most perfect; for a laura consisted of a cluster of separate cells or hermitages in a desert. Euthymius therefore recommended him to the monastery below the hill, which was under the conduct of Theoctistus and a kind of noviceship to the laura, from which it lay about three miles distant, the laura itself being twelve miles from Jerusalem.

Sabas consecrated himself to God with new fervour, working all day and watching in prayer a good part of the night. As he was very lusty and strong, he assisted all his brethren in their offices, and prepared himself the wood and water for the house with extraordinary care and cheerfulness. He served the sick with singular diligence and affection; and was always the first and the last at the divine office and in every regular duty. A temptation put his virtue to the trial. He was sent by his abbot as companion to another monk on certain affairs to Alexandria. There his parents knew him and desired to engage him to accept his father's post and estate in the world; but he gave them to understand that would be to apostatize from the service of God which he had chosen. They pressed him at least to accept a large sum of money for his necessaries; but he would only take three pieces of gold, and those he gave all to his abbot on his return. When he was thirty years of age he obtained leave of St Euthymius to spend five days a week in a remote cave, which time he passed without eating anything, in prayer and manual labour. He left his monastery on Sunday evening, carrying with him palm-twigs, and came back on Saturday morning with fifty baskets which he had made, imposing upon himself a task of ten a day. Thus he had lived five years, till St Euthymius chose him and one Domitian for his companions in his great yearly retreat in the deserts of Rouban, in which Christ is said to have performed his

forty days' fast. They entered this solitude together on the 14th of January and returned to their monastery on Palm Sunday. In the first retreat Sabas fell down in the wilderness almost dead with thirst. St Euthymius, moved with compassion, addressed a prayer to Christ that he would take pity on his young fervent soldier and, striking his staff into the earth, a spring gushed forth; of which Sabas, drinking a little, recovered his strength so as to be enabled to bear the fatigues of his retreat.

After the death of St Euthymius a relaxation of discipline crept into that monastery; on which account Sabas, sensible that a religious house in such a condition is like a general shipwreck in which everyone must save himself as he can, retired into a desert towards the East, in which St Gerasimus lived. The devil here endeavoured to affright him by appearing in divers shapes of serpents and beasts; but the servant of God, armed with prayer and faith, surmounted all his assaults. Four years the saint had spent in his wilderness in a total separation from all commerce with men when, directed by an admonition of heaven, he chose his dwelling in a cave on the top of a high mountain at the bottom of which ran the brook Cedron. The water of that torrent not being there drinkable, he fetched what he used from a spring five miles off, through a very rough and steep way. He was obliged to hang a cord down the descent to hold himself by in mounting up it. Wild herbs which grew on the rocks were his food till certain countrymen, who found him by his cord, out of respect brought him on certain days a little bread, cheese, dates, and other little things which he might want.

After he had lived here five years, several resorted to him desiring to serve God under his direction. He was at first unwilling to consent; but charity overcoming the resistance which his humility raised, he founded a new laura which at first consisted of seventy persons, all desirous to devote themselves to praise and serve God without interruption. He marked to each the place to build their cell; and having prayed to God that they might find water, caused a pit to be dug at the foot of the mountain, where a spring was discovered which subsisted in succeeding ages. He built also a little chapel with an altar. The number of his disciples was shortly increased to one hundred and fifty, which obliged him to extend his laura on the other side of the torrent. He watched over all and provided for their necessities with an incredible attention. He taught them to overcome their passions, to discover and defeat the artifices of the devil, and to pray with fruit and holy perseverance. To cut off all necessities and pretexts of ever leaving their solitude, by the help of certain charitable persons, he supplied them with all things in a manner suitable to persons dead to the world. He had no priest in his community, and he thought no religious man could aspire to that dignity without presumption. He grieved, however, to depend upon the opportunity of some strange priest

for the celebration of the divine mysteries. Certain factious spirits in the community formed a schism against their holy abbot and accused him to Sallust, then lately made Bishop of Jerusalem. The prelate found their invectives groundless, except that the want of a priest was a real defect in the community. He therefore compelled Sabas to receive that sacred character at his hands. The abbot was then fifty-three years old. The reputation of his sanctity drew persons from very remote countries to his laura. After the death of the saint's father, his mother came to him and served God under his direction. With the money which she brought he built two hospitals, one for strangers and another for the sick; also an hospital at Jericho, and a monastery on a neighbouring hill called Castel; and another small one, a mile distant, for the young, where they learned the psalter and religious exercises. When they were perfect in these and ripe in years, he translated them to the house of Castel and drew out of this nursery those that were most perfect into his laura. Sallust, Patriarch of Jerusalem, established St Sabas exarch or superior-general over all the monks of Palestine, who lived in several cells, and St Theodosius over all who lived in community, or the Cenobites. St Sabas, after the example of St Euthymius, left his disciples every year after the octave of the Epiphany, and passed the whole Lent without being seen by anyone, eating nothing all that time, except that he received the holy eucharist every Saturday and Sunday, which he always took with him for that purpose. The patriarch Sallust dying in 493, the rebellious monks above-mentioned went to his successor Elias, hoping that he would hear their complaints. Sabas was informed of their cabals, and not to be an occasion of others' malice, withdrew himself privately saying, that we must resist the devils, but yield to men for the sake of peace.

He went into the desert of Scythopolis, near the river Gadara, where he went into a great cave to pray. It happened to be the den of a huge lion. At midnight the beast came in and finding this guest, dared not touch him, but taking him gently by his garments, plucked him as if it had been to draw him out. The saint was no ways affrighted or troubled, but began leisurely and with much devotion to recite aloud the midnight psalms. The lion went out, and when the holy man had finished matins, came in again and pulled him by the skirts of his clothes as he had done before. The saint spoke to the beast and said, the place was big enough to hold them both. The lion at those words departed, and returned thither no more. Certain thieves found St Sabas in his cave, and were so moved by his example and discourses, that they all embraced a penitential life. Many persons here again put themselves under his conduct, but finding himself distracted by their direction and by a number of visitants who resorted thither, he abandoned his cell to them and this place grew into a monastery. He enjoyed the sweetness of perfect solitude some time when, moved with

tender charity and compassion, he went to visit his former rebellious monks, who continued hardened in their iniquity and were joined by twenty others. The saint was pierced with grief to see them thus give death to their own souls and draw others into the same perdition. It seemed to him that he felt his own limbs torn from his body whilst he saw his monks separated from him. In order to soften their hatred and malice, he gave them every token of the greatest sweetness, tenderness, and goodness; but they were not yet to be gained. He left them a second time to ask their conversion with greater fervour of the Father of mercies. He retired near Nicopolis, living some time under the boughs of a shady tree, the fruit of which furnished him with food, till the master of the field built him a cell and afforded him his scanty diet. Elias, the patriarch, ordered Sabas to appoint a superior for the disciples whom he had gathered at Nicopolis, and to return to his great laura, to which he sent his orders to receive him. The factious monks, in a rage, threw down a building which he had raised and, after many disorders, left that place and settled in certain old ruinous cells near the brook Theon. The great laura was freed from their scandals, and Sabas soon renewed in it the spirit of fervour and charity. His zeal and compassion for the seditious apostates made him still to weep for them. He even procured and sent them seventy pieces of gold, to build them a church and furnish them with necessaries. This excess of goodness made them to enter into themselves, confess their crime, and submit themselves to their abbot. St Sabas nominated a superior to govern them; and under his direction this became a new very regular monastery. The saint founded several others after the same model.

The eastern churches were then in great confusion. The Emperor Anastasius supported Eutychian heresy, and banished many Catholic bishops. The patriarch Elias sent to him as deputies St Sabas, with other famous abbots, to endeavour to stop the fury of this persecution. Sabas was seventy years old when he undertook this journey to Constantinople. As he was dressed like some poor beggar, the officers at the gate of the imperial palace admitted the rest, but stopped him. Sabas made no reply, but withdrew into a corner to employ his time in prayer. When the emperor had read the letter of the patriarch, in which great commendations were bestowed on Sabas, he asked where he was. The saint was sought, and at length found in a corner reciting the psalms. Anastasius gave the abbots liberty to ask what they wanted or desired for themselves; the rest presented their petitions, but Sabas had no request to make in his own name. Being pressed by the emperor to ask some favour, he only begged that his majesty would restore peace to the church and not disturb the clergy. The emperor gave him a thousand pieces of gold to employ in charities. Sabas stayed all the winter in Constantinople and often visited the emperor to gain his point. The prince had caused a heretical council

at Sidon to condemn the general council of Chalcedon, and required the bishops to subscribe this decree, banishing many who refused to do it. However he spared Elias, patriarch of Jerusalem, at the repeated entreaties of Sabas, and dismissed the holy abbot with honour, giving him a thousand pieces of gold more to be distributed among the poor in his country. The saint returned to his solitude and the emperor dying, according to what our holy abbot had foretold, Justin, his successor, favoured the true faith. St Sabas, laying hold of that opportunity, went to Cæsarea, Scythopolis, and other places, preaching the Catholic faith, and bringing back many monks and seculars into its fold. A drought which had continued five years produced a famine in Palestine. The prayers of the saint obtained supplies for his seven monasteries in their extreme necessity, and at last rain, to the universal joy of the whole country.

In the ninety-first year of his age, at the request of Peter, patriarch of Jerusalem, he undertook a second journey to Constantinople in favour of the Christians of Palestine, who had been calumniated at court. Justinian, who then occupied the imperial throne, received him with great honour, granted him all his requests, and offered to settle annual revenues for the maintenance of all his monasteries. The holy abbot thanked his majesty, but said they stood not in need of such revenues as long as the monks should serve God. However, he begged a remission of all taxes in favour of the people of Palestine for a certain term in consideration of what they had suffered by the plunders of the Samaritans: that his majesty would build a hospital at Jerusalem for the pilgrims, and a fortress for the protection of the hermits and monks against the inroads of barbarians; that he would bestow some ornaments on the Church of our Lady, which was lately built, and would afford his protection to the Catholics. All which things were granted. It happened one day that the emperor being busy in council in dispatching certain affairs of the saint, who was himself present, when it was the hour of tierce the abbot went out to recite his prayers. His companion, called Jeremy, said it was not well done to leave the emperor on such an occasion. "My son," replied Sabas, "the emperor does his duty, and we must do ours"; so exact was he in all the rules of his state. St Sabas returned into Palestine with the imperial orders, which he delivered to the magistrates of Jerusalem, Scythopolis, and Cæsarea, and saw everywhere put in execution. Soon after his return to his laura he fell sick: the patriarch persuaded him to suffer himself to be conveyed to a neighbouring church, where he served him with his own hands. The pains of the saint were very sharp, but God supported him under them in perfect sentiments of patience and resignation. Finding his last hour approach, he begged the patriarch that he might be carried back to his laura. He appointed Melitas of Berytus his successor, gave him excellent instructions, and then lay four days in silence without seeing anyone, that

he might entertain himself with God alone. On the 5th of December, in the evening, having received the holy communion, he departed to our Lord in 532 (not 531, as Jos. Assemani demonstrates against Baronius, &c.), being ninety-four years old. He is commemorated on this day both in the Greek and Latin Calendars.

St Sabas met with persecutors among the monks, to whom his virtue seemed too scrupulous a severity; and these men were long insensible to his mild remonstrances and holy instructions, animated by the example of his admirable sanctity. How easily do men blind themselves in their passions and excuse to themselves, nay, canonize their more subtle vices! And how difficult is it for such sinners to be reclaimed! It is much easier to convert a notorious sinner than one who is falsely just. The one feels his miseries, the other crowns himself with his own hands, and, like the proud Pharisee, makes his own panegyric or apology. This dreadful blindness is a frequent case: men every day study by a false conscience to palliate crimes, and allow themselves many unjustifiable liberties under false pretences. Not to perish by such illusions, we must banish out of our hearts all self-conceit, learn perfectly to die to ourselves, especially in regard to our darling or ruling passions, and never take our passions for our counsellors or guides, as we shall be sure to do if we rely too much on ourselves.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 5:*

ST BIRINUS, a Roman priest sent to England about 625, is honoured in England on this date, although Butler gives his feast as on December 3: ST NICETIUS, Bishop of Triers in the first century: and ST SABAS, Abbot in Capadossia in the same age. He lived for ninety-four years and is commemorated on this date in both the Latin and Greek calendars.

## DECEMBER 6

### ST NICHOLAS, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA (A.D. 342)

[The acts of Nicholas, published about the year 912 by Metaphrastes, are extant, translated by Lipoman, Surius, &c. Others much shorter, but imperfect, compiled by Methodius Patriarch of Constantinople, about the year 840, are published by Mombritius Falconius, &c. Another life of St Nicholas was wrote by John, deacon of Naples, anno 860, from Methodius and others. (See Murat, Ital. Scriptor. t. i. part 2, p. 287, and Jos. Assemani, t. v. p. 417.) See several acts of his life, published by Falconius, Archbishop of San-Severino, at Naples, in 1751, also Tillemont, t. vi. Vie de St Nicholas, et Note 1, 2. Fleury, t. xiii. p. 446.]

THE great veneration with which this saint has been honoured, both in the Greek and Latin churches for many ages, and the great number of altars and churches which have been everywhere erected in his memory, are proofs of his extraordinary sanctity and of the glory which he enjoys with God. The Emperor Justinian built a church in his honour at Constantinople, in the quarter called Blaquernæ, about the year 430,<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Procop. de Edific. Justinian, lib. i. c. 6, p. 31, Putignani, Diatr. l. c. 5, pp. 37, 52.

he was titular saint of four churches in Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> All accounts agree that he was a native of Patara, in Lycia. We are told that in his infancy he observed the fasts of Wednesdays and Fridays, refusing to suck the breasts on those days. Happy are they who, from their infancy and innocent age, are inured to the exercises of devotion, penance, and perfect obedience. St Nicholas increased his fervour in these and all other virtues with his years, especially when he had devoted himself to a religious life in the monastery of Holy Sion, near Myra, of which house he was made abbot by the archbishop, its founder. Charity in comforting and relieving the distressed seemed his characteristical virtue. Amongst many other instances, it is related that when three young virgins were exposed through distress to the danger of falling into vicious courses, he, for three successive nights, conveyed to them through the window a competent sum of money for a fortune for one of them, so that they were all portioned and afterwards happily married. Lycia was a large ancient province of Asia, in which St Paul had planted the faith. Myra, the capital, three miles from Patara and from the sea, was an archiepiscopal see, founded by St Nicander, of so great dignity that in later ages, thirty-six suffragan bishoprics were subject to it. This metropolitan church falling vacant, the holy abbot Nicholas was chosen archbishop, and in that exalted station became famous by his extraordinary piety and zeal, and an incredible number of stupendous miracles. The Greek histories of his life agree that he suffered imprisonment for the faith, and made a glorious confession in the latter part of the persecution raised by Diocletian: and that he was present at the great council of Nice, and there condemned Arianism. The silence of other authors make many justly suspect these circumstances.

The history of the translation of his relics place his death in 342. He died at Myra and was buried in his own cathedral. The relics of St Nicholas were kept with great honour at Myra, till they were translated into Italy. Certain merchants of Bari, a seaport in the kingdom of Naples situated on the Adriatic Gulf, sailed in three ships to the coast of Lycia; and watching an opportunity when no Mohammedans were near the place, went to the church in which the relics of St Nicholas were kept, which stood in a desert place three miles from the sea, and was guarded by a small community of monks. They broke open the marble coffin in which the sacred bones lay, and carried them off to their ships; the inhabitants, upon the alarm given, pursued them to the shore with horrible outcries, but the Europeans were got safe on board. They landed at Bari on the 9th of May 1087, and the sacred treasure was deposited by the archbishop in the Church of St Stephen. On the first day, thirty persons were cured of various distempers, imploring the intercession of St Nicholas, and from that time the tomb of St Nicholas of Bari has been famous for pilgrimages.

<sup>1</sup> Du Cange, Constantinopolis Christians, lib. iv. c. 6, n. 67. Codinus Orig. Constan. p. 62.

The authentic history of this translation, written by John, at that time archdeacon of Bari, by order of the archbishop, is extant in Surius.

St Nicholas is esteemed a patron of children, because he was from his infancy a model of innocence and virtue, and to form that tender age to sincere piety was always his first care and delight. To impress on the minds of children perfect sentiments of devotion, religion, and all virtues, with an earnestness in all duties, is a task often as delicate as it is important. Instructions must be made sensible and adapted by similes, parables, and examples, to the weakness of their capacities. Above all, they are to be enforced by the conduct of those with whom children converse. They learn their maxims, imbibe their spirit, and are moulded upon their example. A child which sees those who are about him love their own ease and ever seek what best pleases their senses; still more, if he observes them to be choleric, peevish, vain, slothful, or impatient, will naturally cherish these passions and yield up the government of himself to them, instead of learning by tractableness, humility, meekness, and self-denial, to subdue and govern them. And so in all other points. Precepts and exhortations lose their force when contradicted by example; and whilst the infant sees everyone study to please himself in everything, in flat opposition to the rules of the gospel which he hears preached from their mouths, he seems tacitly persuaded that such a conduct is reconcilable with those very maxims which condemn it.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 6:*

ST DIONYSIA, ST DATIVA and other martyrs: ST NICHOLAS, Archbishop of Myra in Asia, in 342. He is known as "Thaumaturgas" or worker of miracles. The number of altars and churches erected in his honour testify to his authority: ST PETER PASCHAL, Bishop of Jaen, an illustrious member of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy, who devoted all his energies to the ransom of captives and the conversion of the Mussulmans. In 1300 he "died a martyr in a Moorish prison."

## DECEMBER 7

### ST AMBROSE, BISHOP CONFESSOR, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

(A.D. 397)

[From his works, and his short life written at the request of St Austin, by Paulinus, who was his deacon and secretary at the time of his death, and was afterwards promoted to the priesthood. See also the Church historians of that age, and the histories of his life compiled by Hermant, Tillemont, Rivet, Hist. Littér. de la France, t. i. part 2, p. 325; Vagliano, Sommario de Gliarivescovi di Milano; and du Frische and Nic. le Nourri, the two Maurist Benedictin editors of his works, in 1686, at the end of the second and last volume. See also Archiepiscoporum Mediolanensium Series Critico-Chronologica, Auctore Jos. Saxio. Bibl. Ambrosianæ prefecto. Anno 1756.]

An invincible courage and constancy in resisting evil is a necessary ingredient of virtue, especially in the episcopal character. Gentleness, meekness, humility, and obedience, make the servant of God ready to yield and conform himself to everyone in things indifferent; but in those

of duty he is inflexible, not with wilfulness or obstinacy, but with modesty, yet invincible firmness. Of this virtue St Ambrose, in the judgment of the learned Hermant, was the most admirable model among all the great pastors of God's church since the Apostles. His father, whose name was also Ambrose, was prefect of the prætorium in Gaul, by which office not only France, but also a considerable part of Italy and Germany, the five Roman provinces in Britain, eight in Spain, and Mauritania Tingitana, in Africa, were under his jurisdiction. He was blessed with three children: Marcellina, the eldest, who received the religious veil from the hands of Pope Liberius, Satyrus, and our saint, who bore his father's name. It is clear, from Paulinus, that he was born in the city where his father resided and kept his court in Gaul, but whether this was Arles, Lyons, or Triers, modern authors are not agreed in their conjectures. The saint's birth happened about the year 340. Whilst the child lay asleep in one of the courts of his father's palace, a swarm of bees flew about his cradle and some of them crept in and out of his mouth, which was open; at last they mounted up into the air so high that they quite vanished out of sight. This was esteemed a presage of future greatness and eloquence. The like is said to have happened to Plato. The father of St Ambrose dying whilst he was yet an infant, his mother left Gaul and returned to Rome, her own country. She took special care of the education of her children, and Ambrose profited much by her instructions, and by the domestic examples which she, his sister, and other holy virgins that were with them, set him.

He learned the Greek language, became a good poet and orator, and went with his brother Satyrus from Rome to Milan, which was then the seat of the prætorium, or supreme court of judicature. His writings are, to this day, a standing proof how vigorously he applied himself to human literature. Having finished his studies he was taken notice of, and his friendship was courted by the first men of the empire, particularly by Anicius Probus and Symmachus, two persons of great learning and abilities, though the latter was an idolater. The first was made by Valentinian in 368, prætorian prefect of Italy, and in his court St Ambrose pleaded causes with so much reputation that Probus made choice of him to be his assessor. Afterwards he made him Governor of Liguria and Æmilia, that is, of all that country which comprehends at this day the archbishoprics with the suffragan dioceses of Milan, Turin, Genoa, Ravenna, and Bologna. Probus, who was a magistrate of great worth and integrity, said to him at parting, "Go thy way, and govern more like a bishop than a judge." The young governor, by his watchfulness, probity, and mildness, endeavoured to comply with this advice, which was most conformable to his natural goodness and inclinations. Auxentius, an Arian, and a violent and subtle persecutor of the Catholics, who, upon the banishment of St Dionysius, had usurped the see of Milan and held it tyrannically for almost twenty

years, died in 374. The city was distracted by furious parties and tumults about the election of a new bishop—some of the clergy and people demanding an Arian, others a Catholic for their pastor. To prevent an open sedition, St Ambrose thought it the duty of his office to go to the church in which the assembly was held; there he made an oration to the people with much discretion and mildness, exhorting them to proceed in their choice with the spirit of peace and without tumult. While he was yet speaking, a child cried out, “Ambrose Bishop.” This the whole assembly took up, and both Catholics and Arians unanimously proclaimed him Bishop of Milan. This unexpected choice surprised him; he presently withdrew, and made use of all the artifices he could to shun this charge. He ascended the bench of justice, and affecting to seem cruel and unworthy of the priesthood, caused certain criminals to be brought before him and put to the torture. The people, perceiving all the stratagems he made use of to be effected, continued still in their choice. Whereupon he stole out of the city by night with a design to retire to Pavia; but, missing his way, he wandered up and down all night and found himself next morning at the gates of Milan. His flight being known, a guard was set upon him, and a relation of all that had passed was sent to the emperor, whose consent was necessary that an officer in his service should be chosen bishop. Ambrose wrote also to him on his own behalf, that he might be excused from that office. Valentinian, who was then at Triers, answered the clergy and people, that it gave him the greatest pleasure that he had chosen governors and judges who were fit for the episcopal office; and at the same time he sent an order to the vicar, or lieutenant of Italy, to see that the election took place. In the meantime Ambrose once more made his escape and hid himself in the house of Leontius, one of those senators who had the title of Clarissimi; but the vicar of Italy having published a severe order against anyone who should conceal him or who, knowing where he was, should not discover him, Leontius by an innocent kind of treachery declared where he was. Ambrose finding it in vain to resist any longer, yielded himself up; but insisted that the canons forbade anyone who was only a catechumen to be promoted to the priesthood. He was answered, that such ecclesiastical canons may be dispensed with on extraordinary occasions. Ambrose therefore was first baptized, and after due preparation, received the episcopal consecration on the 7th of December in 374, not in 375, as some have wrote; for Valentinian I died on the 10th of November in 375. St Ambrose was about thirty-four years old when he was ordained bishop.

He was no sooner placed in the episcopal chair but, considering that he was no longer a man of this world and resolving to break all ties which could hold him to it, he gave to the church and the poor all the gold and silver of which he was possessed. His lands and estates he gave also to the church, reserving only an income for the use of his sister Marcellina

during her life. The care of his family and temporalities he committed to his brother Satyrus that, being disengaged from all temporal concerns, he might give himself up wholly to his ministry and prayer. So perfectly did he renounce the world, and his mind dwelt so much above it, that temptations to riches and honours never had any weight with him. Soon after his ordination he wrote to the Emperor Valentinian severe complaints against some of the imperial judges and magistrates. To which the emperor replied, "I was long since acquainted with your freedom of speech, which did not hinder me from consenting to your ordination. Continue to apply to our sins the remedies prescribed by the divine law." St Basil also wrote to him to congratulate with him, or rather with the church, upon his promotion, and to exhort him vigorously to oppose the Arians and to fight a good fight.<sup>1</sup> St Ambrose first applied himself to study the scriptures and to read ecclesiastical writers, particularly Origen and St Basil. In his studies he put himself under the conduct and instruction of Simplicianus, a learned and pious Roman priest whom he loved as a friend, honoured as a father, and reverenced as a master. This Simplicianus succeeded him in the archbishopric of Milan, and is honoured among the saints on the 16th of August. Whilst St Ambrose studied he neglected not from the beginning assiduously to instruct his people. He purged the diocese of Milan of the leaven of the Arian heresy with such wonderful success that, in the year 385, there remained not one citizen of Milan infected with it except a few Goths and some persons belonging to the imperial family, as he assures us.<sup>2</sup> His instructions were enforced by an admirable innocence and purity of manners, prayer, rigorous abstinence, and a fast which he kept almost every day; for he never dined except on Sundays, the feasts of certain famous martyrs, and all Saturdays, on which it was the custom at Milan never to fast; but when he was at Rome he fasted on Saturdays. To avoid the danger of intemperance he excused himself from going to banquets or great tables, and entertained others at his own with great frugality. He spent a considerable part both of the day and of the night in devout prayer; and every day offered the holy sacrifice of the altar for his people.<sup>3</sup> He devoted himself entirely to the service of his flock, and of every state and condition in it; one laborious employment serving for relaxation from another, he allowed himself no moments for amusement. He relieved the poor, comforted the afflicted, and hearkened to all men with meekness and charity, so that all his people loved and admired him. It was an inviolable rule with him never to have any hand in making matches, never to persuade anyone to serve in the army, and never to recommend persons to places at court. He had a soul exquisitely tender and compassionate, and he often employed his interest to save the lives of condemned persons. He wept with those that wept,

<sup>1</sup> St Basil, Ep. 55.

<sup>2</sup> St Ambr. Ep. 20, n. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 20, n. 25.

and he rejoiced with those that rejoiced. His charity was as extensive as the necessities of human nature, and he styled the poor his stewards and treasurers, in whose hands he deposited his revenues. It was his constant care and practice to do good for evil, and to requite affronts and injuries by offices of kindness. His chamber was for the greatest part of the day filled with persons who came to consult him, and to ask his private advice. St Austin, when he came to visit him, always found him so overwhelmed with such business, or so intent in the few moments he was able to steal to himself, that he often went into his chamber and, after some stay, came out again without being perceived by the holy bishop whom, out of mere pity, he durst not interrupt.

Our holy bishop, in his discourses, frequently enlarged very much on the praises of the holy state and virtue of virginity. By his exhortations many virgins who came from Bologna, Placentia, and even Mauritania, served God in this state under his direction. He had been bishop only two years when, at the request of his sister Marcellina, he committed to writing what he had delivered from the pulpit in commendation of that holy state.<sup>1</sup> This he executed in his three books, *On Virgins*, or *On Virginity*, written in the year 377 and penned with singular elegance, for which they are justly admired by St Jerom and St Austin, though the sincere piety which the language everywhere breathes, deserves chiefly the reader's attention. He enlarges on the excellency of virginity, and shows the spiritual advantages of that state. In the third book he prescribes the principal duties of those who have embraced it, ordering them to be abstemious, to shun visits, and apply themselves to spiritual exercises and reflection, to pray often in the day, and to repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Psalms in bed before they sleep, and when they awake; and to recite every morning the creed as the seal of our faith. He adds that they ought to weep and to shun excessive mirth, particularly dancing, on which he mentions the fatal consequences of the dancing of Herodias's daughter. St Ambrose mentions <sup>2</sup> that there were twenty virgins at Bologna, and that they laboured with their own hands, not only that they might gain a subsistence, but that they might also have wherewithal to bestow in charity. St Marcellina, who received the veil from Pope Liberius in the Church of St Peter at Rome, on Christmas Day,<sup>3</sup> did not live in a society of virgins, but with her relations in Rome. Many other consecrated virgins did the same at that time; but they had a part of the church to themselves, separated from the rest by boards; and on the walls were written sentences of the scripture for their instruction.<sup>4</sup> St Ambrose wrote his treatise, *Of Widows*, soon after the former work, to exhort them to perpetual chastity. This was soon followed by that *On Virginity*, which he compiled

<sup>1</sup> St Ambr. lib. i. de Virgin.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. i. de Virgin. c. 10, and lib. i. de Institut. Virgin. c. 1.

<sup>3</sup> St Ambr. lib. iii. de Virgin. c. 1.

<sup>4</sup> L. ad Virg. laps. c. 6.

to give us, from the holy scriptures, a high idea of that virtue; but he adds a most necessary caution, that the veil is not to be given rashly to young virgins, especially such as are of a light unconstant behaviour. "Some complain," says he, "that mankind will shortly fail if so many are consecrated virgins. I desire to know who ever wanted a wife and could not find one? The killing of an adulterer, the pursuing or waging war against a ravisher, are the consequences of marriage. The number of people is greatest where virginity is most esteemed. Inquire how many virgins are consecrated every year at Alexandria, all over the East, and in Africa, where there are more virgins than there are men in this country." May not the French and Austrian Netherlands, full of numerous monasteries, yet covered with populous cities, be at present esteemed a proof of this remark? The populousness of China, where great numbers of new-born infants are daily exposed to perish, is a dreadful proof that the voluntary virginity of some in these remote ages of the world is no prejudice. Wars and the sea, not the number of virgins, are the destroyers of the human race, as St Ambrose observes; though the state of virginity is not to be rashly engaged in, and marriage is not only holy, but the general state of mankind in the world. St Ambrose's book, entitled *The Institution of a Virgin*, contains a confutation of Bonosus, who renewed the error of Helvidius, denying the perpetual virginity of the Holy Mother of God. The saint adds the instructions he had given to Ambrosia, one of the twenty virgins at Bologna who served God under his direction: he shows that retirement, silence, humility, and prayer are the principal duties of a Christian virgin. Towards the end the ceremonies of the solemn profession of a virgin are described. She presented herself at the foot of the altar, where she made her profession before the people; the bishop preached to her and gave her the veil which distinguished her from other virgins; but her hair was not cut, as was done in the initiation of clergymen and monks. In the close the author invites Jesus Christ to come on the day of these spiritual nuptials to receive his handmaid, who consecrates herself to him by a public profession, after having long before dedicated herself to him in spirit and in her heart.

Gratian, by the death of Valens, became master of the eastern empire; but, seeing it attacked on all sides by triumphant barbarians, sent thither Theodosius, a general of great probity and valour who, with his father, a virtuous general of the same name, had triumphed over the barbarians in Britain and Africa; but the father, out of mere jealousy, being unjustly put to death by Valens, the son had led from that time a retired life in Spain. Theodosius vanquished the Goths, pacified the whole empire, and made excellent regulations in all the provinces under his command, insomuch that, on the 16th of January 379, Gratian gave him the purple and crown at Sirmich in presence of their two armies, and declared him his

colleague and Emperor of the East, giving him Thrace and all that Valens had possessed, and also the eastern part of Illyricum of which Thessalonica was then the capital. The Goths had extended their ravages from Thrace into Illyricum and as far as the Alps. St Ambrose, not content to lay out all the money he could raise in redeeming the captives, employed for that use the gold vessels belonging to the church, which he caused to be broken and melted down; but such only as were not yet consecrated, reserving those which were for a more pressing necessity.<sup>1</sup> The Arians reproached him upon this account; to whom he answered, that he thought it much more expedient to save the souls of men than gold: for not only the lives of the captives and the honour of the women were preserved, but the children were rescued from being educated in idolatry. "I find," said he, "that the blood of Jesus Christ poured out in the gold plate, hath not only shone therein, but hath also impressed upon it the virtue of redemption." Many Arians who, upon that occasion fled from Illyricum into Italy, were converted to the faith by the care of St Ambrose, who was indefatigable in every branch of his pastoral charge. Every Lent he bestowed so much pains and labour in instructing the catechumens that, when he died, five bishops could hardly go through with that which he used himself to perform.<sup>2</sup>

In 379 St Ambrose lost his brother Satyrus, to whom he had committed the care of all his temporal affairs. Satyrus, attempting to go to Africa to recover some money due to his brother, was shipwrecked; and, not being baptized, desired some that were there to give him the holy mysteries, that is, the blessed eucharist, to carry with him; for the faithful carried it on long voyages that they might not die deprived of it. As none but those who were baptized were allowed even to have a sight of it, Satyrus begged them to wrap it in an orarium, which was a kind of long handkerchief at that time worn by the Romans about their necks. This he wrapped about him and threw himself into the sea, without seeking a plank to support him; yet by swimming he was the first who came to land. It seems to have been in the isle of Sardinia. Satyrus, being then a catechumen, addressed himself to the bishop of the place in order to be immediately baptized; but first asked him whether he was in communion with the Catholic bishops, that is, with the Church of Rome, says St Ambrose; and finding that he took part in the schism of Lucifer, he chose rather to venture again upon the sea than to receive baptism from a schismatic. When he arrived in a Catholic country he was baptized, the grace of which sacrament he never forfeited, as his brother affirms. Satyrus died soon after his return to Milan, in the arms of St Ambrose and St Marcellina, and left his wealth to be disposed of by them without making a will. They thought he had only made them stewards of it, and gave it all to the poor.

<sup>1</sup> St Ambr. Offic. lib. ii. c. 15, n. 70, et c. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Paulin. vit. Ambros. n. 38.

The funeral of Satyrus was performed with great solemnity, at which St Ambrose made an oration, which is extant, from which these particulars are taken.<sup>1</sup> The seventh day after, they returned to the grave to repeat the solemn obsequies, as was usual; and St Ambrose made there another discourse, in which he expatiated on the happiness of death and the belief of the resurrection; on which account it is often called, *A Discourse on the Resurrection*. The church commemorates St Satyrus on the 17th of September.

In 381 St Ambrose held a council at Milan, against the heresy of Apollinaris; and assisted at another at Aquileia, in which he procured the deposition of two Arian bishops named Palladius and Secundianus. In a journey which he made to Sirmich, he compassed the election of a Catholic bishop to occupy that see, notwithstanding the intrigues of the Empress Justina in favour of an Arian candidate. In 382 our saint assisted at a council which Pope Damasus held at Rome in order to apply a remedy to the divisions which reigned in the oriental church about the see of Antioch. Paulinus relates, that whilst he continued there, a certain woman that kept a public bath and lay bedrid of a palsy, caused herself to be conveyed in a chair to the place where the holy bishop said mass, and importuned him to intercede with heaven for her; and while he was praying and laying his hands upon her, she caught hold of his garments and, kissing them, found her strength return and rose up and walked.

The Emperor Gratian was chaste, temperate, mild, beneficent, and a zealous Catholic; and St Ambrose obtained of him, among other wholesome laws, one by which, to prevent surprises in condemning accused persons, it was enacted that no one should be executed sooner than thirty days after sentence. He prevailed with the same prince to remove the altar of victory out of the senate-house, which Julian the Apostate had restored. Yet this emperor gave too much of his time to hunting, shooting of beasts in a park, casting the javelin, and other such corporal exercises, making an employment of a recreation, in which idleness his governors and ministers entertained him, that they might remain masters of affairs. Hence he did not sufficiently attend to business and look into the conduct of his officers; and Macedonius, prefect of the prætorium, was a man openly addicted to bribery. Complaints which were raised, alienated the affections of many; and Maximus, an accomplished general who commanded the troops in Britain (where Theodosius had formerly been his colleague, who was then become Emperor of the East), assumed the purple and passed with his army into Gaul. Gratian left Triers upon his approach and near Lyons a battle was fought, which continued five days, till Gratian, perceiving part of his army deserting him, fled with three hundred horse. Andragathius, general of Maximus's horse, contrived the following

<sup>1</sup> St Ambr. de Excessu. Fr. Satyri.

stratagem: He was carried in a close horse-litter, and it was given out that it was the empress who was coming to her husband. Gratian passed the Rhone to meet her; but when he came near, the general leaped out of the litter and stabbed him. This happened on the 25th of August in 383. Gratian lamented with his expiring breath that his father Ambrose was not with him. Maximus after this ranged at pleasure, treated those of Gratian's party with great severity, and threatened to cross the Alps and attack Valentinian II, Gratian's half-brother, who resided at Milan with his mother Justina. To prevent this danger the empress dispatched St Ambrose upon an embassy to Maximus. The saint, by the gravity of his person, the authority of his office, his humble address, and eloquent insinuations, stopped the usurper in his march, and at length concluded with him a treaty, by which Maximus was to enjoy Gaul, Britain, and Spain, and Valentinian Italy with the rest of the West. St Ambrose passed the winter with Maximus at Triers in 384; and had the courage constantly to refuse to communicate with a tyrant who was stained with the blood of his master, and to exhort him to do penance. In these times of confusion the Gentiles at Rome attempted to restore the abolished rites of their superstition. At their head appeared Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, a senator of great eminence, an admirable scholar, statesman, and orator, at that time prefect of Rome. In autumn, in the year 384, this man presented a request to Valentinian, in the name of the senate, begging that the altar of victory might be re-established in the senate-house, and the salaries restored to the priests and vestal virgins; to which he ascribed the victories and prosperity of ancient Rome. A like petition had been before presented to Gratian in 382, but was disavowed by the Christian senators (who were the greater number), and rejected by that prince. St Ambrose, having privately received notice of Symmachus's petition, wrote against it two beautiful apologies or letters to Valentinian, in which even his eloquence seems superior to that of the pagan, who was esteemed the greatest orator of his age. In the first he desired that a copy of Symmachus's petition should be communicated to him, remonstrating at the same time to the emperor, that as all the subjects of the Roman empire ought to submit to him, so he was obliged to obey the only true God, and to defend the religion of Christ; that he could never concur to idolatry; and the church or bishops would never receive oblations from him who had given ornaments to the temples of idols; his gifts cannot be presented on the altar of Jesus Christ who hath made an altar for false gods, &c.<sup>1</sup> In the second the saint confuted all that was alleged in the petition.<sup>2</sup> These apologies being read in the council in presence of the emperor, he answered the Gentiles, that he loved Rome as his mother, but obeyed God as the author of his salvation.

The Empress Justina, though an Arian, durst not openly espouse the

<sup>1</sup> St Ambr Ep. 17

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 18.

interest of her sect during the lives of her husband, Valentinian I, and of Gratian. But the peace which St Ambrose had procured between Maximus and her son gave her an opportunity to persecute the Catholics, especially the holy bishop—for she ungratefully forgot the obligations which she and her son had to him. When Easter was near at hand, in 385, she sent to him certain ministers of state to demand of him the Portian basilica, now called St Victor's, without the city, for the use of the Arians, for herself, her son, and many officers of the court. The saint replied that he could never give up the temple of God. By other messengers of the first rank she afterwards demanded the new basilica; then again insisted on having at least the former; but the bishop was inflexible. Certain deans, or officers of the court, were sent to take possession of the Portian basilica, by hanging up in it imperial escutcheons. The citizens, enraged at this violence, seized in the street an Arian priest called Castulus. St Ambrose being informed of this whilst he was at the altar, wept bitterly, prayed that God would suffer no blood to be shed, and sent out certain priests and deacons who delivered the Arian priest. The court, to punish the citizens for this commotion, taxed them two hundred pounds weight in gold. They answered that they were willing to pay as much more, provided they might be allowed to retain the true faith. Certain counts and tribunes came to summon St Ambrose to deliver up the basilica, saying the emperor claimed it as his right. The bishop answered, “Should he require what is my own, as my land or my money, I would not refuse him, though all that I possess belongs to the poor; but the emperor has no right to that which belongs to God. If you require my estate, you may take it; if my body, I readily give it up; have you a mind to load me with irons, or to put me to death, I am content. I shall not fly to the protection of the people, nor cling to the altars: I choose rather to be sacrificed for the sake of the altars.”<sup>1</sup> St Ambrose continued all that day in the old basilica; but at night went home to his house, that if they designed to seize him, they might readily find him. The next morning, which was Wednesday, he went out before day to the old basilica, which was immediately surrounded with soldiers. A troop of soldiers was sent to seize on the new church; but St Ambrose sent certain priests thither to officiate, and they threatened the soldiers with excommunication if they offered any violence; and they came into the church and prayed peaceably, being Catholics. In the evening St Ambrose preached on patience. After the sermon a secretary arrived from the court, who, calling the bishop aside, made him severe reproaches, and told him that he set himself up for a tyrant. The bishop replied, “Maximus, who complains that by my embassy I stopped him from marching into Italy, says not that I am the tyrant over Valentinian. Bishops never set themselves up for tyrants, but have often suffered much from tyrants.” The

<sup>1</sup> Rufin. Hist. lib. xi. c. 15. St Ambrose, Ep. 20, ad Soror Mabill. Itin. Ital. p. 17.

Catholics spent all that day in sorrow; and the basilica being surrounded with soldiers, St Ambrose could not return home to his own house; but passed the night in reading psalms with his brethren in the little basilica of the church, or in some oratory in the outer buildings. The next day, which was Maundy Thursday, St Ambrose prayed and preached to the people, till news was brought him that the emperor had withdrawn the soldiers from the basilica, and had restored to the merchants and citizens the mulct which he had imposed upon them: upon which all joined in joy and thanksgiving. St Ambrose gave an account of these transactions to his sister Marcellina, who was then at Rome, and had earnestly begged it of him. At the conclusion of this relation, he adds that he foresees greater commotions. After this he says, “The eunuch Calligonus, high chamberlain, said to me, ‘Thou despisest Valentinian whilst I am yet living; I will cut off thy head.’ To which I replied, ‘May God permit me so to suffer; then I shall suffer as a bishop, and you will act a part becoming a eunuch or a courtier. I beseech God that all the enemies of the church may cease persecuting her, and level all their shafts at me, to quench their thirst with my blood.’”<sup>1</sup> Soon after Calligonus was convicted of a heinous crime and beheaded.

The empress was still more exasperated against St Ambrose by the resistance of the people; and persuaded her son to make a law for authorizing the religious assemblies of the Arians, which was published on the 23rd of January 386.<sup>2</sup> The true author of this law was Mercurinus, whom the Arians made Bishop of Milan for those of their sect, and who took the name of Auxentius II. In consequence of this law, which forbade anyone under pain of death to oppose the religious assemblies of Arians, no one could so much as advise or present a petition against a church being yielded up to them without incurring the danger of being proscribed or put to death.<sup>3</sup> The empress, therefore, in the following Lent, in 386, again demanded of St Ambrose the Portian basilica. The holy prelate answered, “Naboth would not give up the inheritance of his ancestors, and shall I give up that of Jesus Christ? God forbid that I should abandon that of my fathers, of St Dionysius, who died in exile for the defence of the faith; of St Eustorgius, the confessor; of St Miroclus, and of all the other holy bishops, my predecessors.” Dalmatius, a tribune and notary, came to St Ambrose from the emperor with an order that he should choose his judges at court, as Auxentius had done on his side, that his and Auxentius’s cause might be tried before them and the emperor; which if he refused to do, he was forthwith to retire and yield up his see to Auxentius. The saint took the advice of his clergy and of some Catholic bishops, who were then at Milan; then wrote his

<sup>1</sup> St Aug. lib. vi. cap. Julian, c. 14, n. 41.  
<sup>2</sup> St Ambr. Ep. 21, ad Valen.

<sup>3</sup> L. ult. Cod. Theod. de Fide Cathol.

answer to the emperor, wherein, amongst other things, he says, "Who can deny that, in causes of faith, the bishops judge Christian emperors? so far are they from being judged by them. Would you have me choose lay judges, that if they maintain the true faith, they may be banished or put to death? Would you have me expose them either to a prevarication or to torments? Ambrose is not of that consequence for the priesthood to be debased and dishonoured for his sake. The life of one man is not to be compared with the dignity of all the bishops. If a conference is to be held about the faith, it belongs to the bishops to hold it, as was done under Constantine, who left them the liberty of being judges."

After sending this remonstrance to the emperor, signed by his own hand, St Ambrose retired into the church, where he was for some time guarded by the people, who stood within doors night and day lest he should be carried away by violence; and the church was soon surrounded by soldiers sent from court, who suffered people to go in, but no one to come out. St Ambrose being thus shut up with the people, preached often to them. One of those sermons, which he made on Palm Sunday, is extant, under this title: "On not delivering up the Basilicas." In it he says, "Are you afraid that I would forsake you, to secure my own life? But you might have observed by my answer, that I could not possibly forsake the church, because I fear the Lord of the whole world more than the emperor; that if they carry me by force from the church, they may draw away my body, but they can never separate my mind from it: that if he proceeds against me as a prince, I will suffer as a bishop. Why then are you troubled? I shall never quit you voluntarily; but I can never resist or oppose violence. I can sigh and lament: I can weep and groan. But tears are my only arms against swords, soldiers, and Goths. Bishops have no other defence. I cannot, I ought not to resist any other ways. But as to flying away and forsaking my church, that I will never do. The respect which I have for the emperor does not make me yield cowardly: I offer myself willingly to torments, and fear not the mischiefs they threaten me with...." The saint spoke with an astonishing intrepidity of the sword, fire, or banishment, detected boldly the impiety of Auxentius, and other Arian persecutors, and called their new law a flying sword sent over the empire to kill some by corporal death, others in their souls by the guilt of sacrilege. What he mentioned of the chariot is explained by Paulinus, who relates that one Euthymius had placed a chariot at a house near the church, that he might take away St Ambrose with greater ease and carry him into banishment. But a year after he was himself put into the same chariot, and carried from that very house into banishment; under which misfortune St Ambrose furnished him with money and other necessaries for his journey. This historian mentions several other stratagems laid during this time to take or kill the servant of God, and says that one came with a sword to

the chamber of St Ambrose in order to murder him; but that, lifting up his hand with the naked sword, his arm remained extended in the air motionless, till he confessed that Justina had sent him upon that errand, and upon his repentance he recovered the use of the arm. When St Ambrose had remained several days in the church and adjacent buildings within its inclosure, with the people who kept the doors shut, and guarded the passes, the guards were removed and he returned to his house.

St Ambrose mentions<sup>1</sup> that the Arians reproached him with leading the people into error by singing hymns; and he allows that by hymns he taught them to testify their faith in the Trinity. To comfort his people under this persecution he encouraged them to assiduity in singing the hymns and anthems which he composed. Psalms were always sung throughout the whole church; but St Ambrose seems first to have established at Milan the custom which he learned from the oriental churches, of singing psalms alternately by two choirs,<sup>2</sup> which spread from Milan to all the churches of the west. God gave a visible consolation to this saint and his afflicted flock in the very heat of the persecution by the discovery of the relics of SS. Gervasius and Protasius, of which he gives an account in a letter to his sister.<sup>3</sup> These relics were laid in the Faustinian basilica, and the next morning were translated into the Ambrosian basilica; during which translation a blind man named Severus, a butcher by trade, was cured by touching the bier on which the relics lay with a handkerchief, and then applying it to his eyes. He had been blind several years, was known to the whole city, and the miracle was performed before a prodigious number of people; and is testified also by St Austin,<sup>4</sup> who was then at Milan, in three several parts of his works, and by Paulinus in the life of St Ambrose. Our saint made two sermons on the occasion of this translation, in which he speaks of this and other miracles wrought by the holy relics, by which he assures us that many possessed persons were delivered and many sick healed. St Austin<sup>5</sup> and Paulinus say, that an end was put to the persecution of St Ambrose by the discovery of these relics in 386. The Arians indeed at court pretended that St Ambrose had suborned men to feign themselves possessed; which calumny he confutes in the second of these sermons by the notoriety and evidence of the facts, which was such as to put the Arians to silence, and to oblige the empress to let St Ambrose remain in peace. Dr Middleton revives the slanders of the Arians, pretending these miracles to be juggle and imposture. But Dr Cave<sup>6</sup> mentions the miraculous cure of Severus, and the many other miracles wrought by those relics, and by

<sup>1</sup> Serm. de Basil. non trad. n. 34. Paulin. vit. n. 3.

<sup>2</sup> St Isid. Offic. lib. i. c. 7. St Aug. Conf. lib. ix. c. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 2.

<sup>4</sup> St Ambr. Ep. 22. St Aug. Conf. lib. ix. c. 7, et 1, and lib. xxii, de Civ. c. 8, n. 2; also Serm. 286 (ol. 39, de div.), c. 8, n. 2. See on SS. Gervasius and Protasius, June 19

<sup>5</sup> St Aug. Conf. lib. ix. c. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Cave's Life of St Ambrose, sect. 4, p. 400. See Petri Puricelli Historica Dissertatio de SS. Gervasio et Protasio, in fol. Mediolani, 1658.

the towels and handkerchiefs laid upon the bodies as incontestable, attested by St Ambrose in sermons preached upon the spot before the relics. This learned Protestant critic adds, "The truth of which miracles is abundantly justified by St Ambrose, St Austin, and Paulinus, who were all then upon the place; and indeed they were notoriously evident to the whole city, and twice the subject of St Ambrose's sermons. I make no doubt but God suffered these to confront the Arian impieties, and to give the highest attestation to the Catholic cause, so mightily at this time opposed, traduced, and persecuted." Maximus, who had been then acknowledged emperor both by Valentinian and Theodosius in solemn treaties, wrote to Valentinian, exhorting him not to persecute the Catholic Church, as Sozomen and Theodoret testify. "All Italy," said he, "Africa, Gaul, Aquitain, and Spain; and, in short, Rome, which holds the first rank in religion, as well as in empire, maintain this faith."

In the year 387 news daily came to Milan of the preparations Maximus was making to invade Italy. Ambition is restless and insatiable. Maximus thought Britain, Gaul, and Spain, which he possessed in peace and without danger of being molested, as nothing, so long as he was not master of Italy: and the astonishing success of his usurpation made him only enlarge his views further, and think more due to him. Valentinian and his weak mother were in no condition to oppose him, and in this distress they had again recourse to St Ambrose, whom they besought to stand in the gap and venture on a second embassy to stop the march of a prosperous usurper. The good bishop, burying the memory both of public and private injuries, readily undertook the journey, and arriving at Triers, the next day went to court. Maximus refused to admit him to an audience but in public consistory, though the contrary was a customary privilege both of bishops and of all imperial ambassadors. St Ambrose made a remonstrance upon this account, but chose rather to recede from his dignity, than not execute his commission. He therefore was introduced into the consistory, where Maximus was seated on a throne, who rose up to give him a kiss, according to the custom of saluting bishops and great men in those times. But Ambrose stood still among the counsellors, though they persuaded him to go near the throne, and the emperor called him. Maximus reproached him with having deceived him in his former embassy, by preventing him from entering Italy at a time when nothing could have opposed him. St Ambrose said he was come to justify himself, though it was glorious to have saved the life of an orphan prince: but that he could not have opposed the march of his legions, or shut up the Alps with his body, and that he had not deceived him in anything; only when Maximus insisted that Valentinian should come to him, he had pleaded that it was not reasonable that a child should cross the Alps in the depth of winter. He added that Valentinian had sent Maximus's brother, whom he saw there present, safe to him,

when he could have sacrificed him to his passion, when the news of the bloody assassination of his brother Gratian was brought to him; but he conquered his resentment, and scorned to pay like for like. The bishop reproved Maximus for the murder of Gratian, and of many great men whom he had put to death for no other crime than their fidelity to their natural prince; for which he admonished him to do penance. He also entreated him to give up the body of Gratian to Valentinian, a brother dead for his own brother whom he had received alive and unhurt; the ashes of an emperor only that he might not be deprived of the honour of a burial. The tyrant answered that he would consider of it; but he was extremely incensed at St Ambrose, because he constantly refused to communicate either with the tyrant or with any of his bishops; these were the Ithacians, who desired the death of the Priscillianist heretics. When he was inflexible on this point he was ordered forthwith to depart. Seeing Hyginus, an aged bishop, sent at the same time into banishment, he interceded that he might be furnished with necessary provisions, and not sent without a garment to cover him or a bed to lie on. But St Ambrose could not be heard, and was himself thrust out of doors. He therefore returned to Milan and wrote to Valentinian an account of his unsuccessful embassy, advising him to be cautious how he treated with Maximus, a concealed enemy, who pretended peace, but intended war.<sup>1</sup> The event showed the truth of this conjecture. For Valentinian sent Domininus, a favourite courtier, to succeed St Ambrose in this embassy. Maximus entertained him with all the obliging caresses and demonstrations of honour, amused him with assurances and, as an instance of his friendship toward Valentinian, sent back with him a considerable part of his army, as he gave out, to assist the emperor against the barbarians who were then falling upon Pannonia. But these soldiers, coming to the Alps, seized all the narrow passages; which was no sooner done, but Maximus followed after with his whole army and marched without the least opposition into Italy, where he took up his quarters at Aquileia.

The news of this unexpected surprise carried terror into every place. Valentinian and his mother, in the utmost consternation, took ship and fled to Thessalonica, whence they sent to the Emperor Theodosius, to beg his speedy assistance before all was lost. That great prince had been employed in quelling the barbarians on different sides and settling the peace of the church and state in the East, which had hindered him from revenging the death of Gratian. Upon receiving the message of the fugitive young emperor, he left Constantinople and went to Thessalonica where, in the most tender and paternal manner, he comforted the distressed remains of the family of the great Valentinian I. He represented to the young prince that by favouring the Arian impiety and persecuting the Catholic Church,

<sup>1</sup> St Amb. Ep. 24.

he had provoked heaven; and he effaced out of his mind all the impressions of heresy; for it was a fundamental maxim with Theodosius to undertake no enterprise without first doing everything by which he might engage God on his side. Theodosius being then a widower, and meeting at Thessalonica the Princess Galla, sister to Valentinian II, to give him a pledge of his friendship, married her, and in spring 388 declared war against Maximus, and dismissed the ambassador the tyrant had sent to court his favour. It was his chief care to procure the blessing of God upon his army. Setting out from Thessalonica he caused excellent regulations for the discipline and moderation of his troops in their march to be made and observed, insomuch that no city or province was aggrieved by their passage. With incredible valour and prudence he entirely defeated Maximus upon the banks of the Save, near Siscia, now Peisseg, in Pannonia, and soon after that tyrant's brother, Marcellin, upon the Drave, though their armies were superior in numbers to his own. Thence he dispatched Arbogastes, general of the barbarians in his army, into Gaul to seize that country, and marched himself to Aquileia, where Maximus had shut himself up. His own soldiers, seeing it impossible to escape, stripped him of his imperial robes and delivered him into the hands of Theodosius, who reproached him for his perfidiousness with more compassion than anger, and was inclined to spare his life; but at last suffered him to be beheaded on the 28th of July 388, after he had reigned almost five years.

Theodosius proceeded to Milan, where he stayed from the 10th of October to the latter end of May. At Calinicus, in Mesopotamia, certain Christians who had been insulted by the Jews in a religious procession, pulled down their synagogue. Theodosius, who had been informed of the affair by the Count of the East, ordered the bishop and other Christians, who had demolished the synagogue, to rebuild it, and to be rigorously punished. The Oriental bishops wrote to St Ambrose, entreating him to obtain a mitigation of this sentence. St Ambrose solicited him first by a strong letter,<sup>1</sup> and afterwards by a discourse which he made him in the church; and did not go up to the altar to say mass till he had procured his promise of a pardon.<sup>2</sup> The deputies of the senate came to compliment the emperor at Milan, and petitioned that the altar of victory, which Maximus had allowed to be restored, might be preserved in the senate-house. Theodosius seemed inclined, upon motives of state, to grant their request; but St Ambrose easily engaged him to reject it. This emperor, after having passed all the winter and part of the spring at Milan, went to Rome, where in June he received the honour of a triumph. He made his entrance in a chariot drawn by elephants, which the King of Persia had lately sent him. The magnificence of this pomp was incredible,<sup>3</sup> yet nothing in it

<sup>1</sup> St Ambr. Ep. 40.

<sup>2</sup> See Claudian Consul. Honor. Sozom. lib. vii. c. 14. Pacatus in Panegyr.

<sup>3</sup> Paulin. in Vit. St Ambros.

Pacatus in Panegyr.

seemed to be regarded but the conqueror, for whom it was made, and the greatest ornament of this triumph was the modesty of him that triumphed. Theodosius returned to Milan on the 1st of September and restored the whole western empire to Valentinian, in whose mind, by repeated instructions, he imprinted so deeply the Catholic faith that the young prince put himself entirely under the discipline of St Ambrose and honoured him as his father to his death. His mother Justina was dead before the end of the war. The heresiarch Jovinian having been condemned by Pope Siricius at Rome, retired to Milan; but was there rejected by Theodosius, and anathematized by St Ambrose in a council which he held in 390.

This council was yet sitting when the news of a dreadful massacre committed at Thessalonica was brought to Milan.<sup>1</sup> Botheric, who was general of the forces in Illyricum and resided at Thessalonica, caused a charioteer who belonged to the circus to be put in prison for having seduced a young servant in his family, and refused to release him on a certain festival on which his appearance in the circus was demanded for the public diversion. The people not being able to obtain his liberty, grew enraged, and proceeded to so violent a sedition that some officers were stoned to death and their bodies dragged along the streets, and Botheric himself was slain. Upon this news Theodosius, who was naturally hasty, was transported with passion; but was mitigated by St Ambrose and some other bishops, and promised to pardon the delinquents. Ruffinus, who became afterwards a firebrand in the state and was master of the offices, and other courtiers and ministers persuaded him that the insolence of the people was grown to the highest pitch merely by impunity, and must be restrained by an example of severity. It was therefore resolved that a warrant should be sent to the commander in Illyricum to let loose the soldiers against the city till about seven thousand persons should be put to death. This inhuman commission was executed with the utmost cruelty whilst the people were assembled in the circus, soldiers surrounding and rushing in upon them. The slaughter continued for three hours, and seven thousand men were massacred without distinguishing the innocent from the guilty. Such was the brutality of the soldiers that a faithful slave, who offered to die for his master, was murdered by them. It is also related that a certain father seeing his two sons ready to be butchered, by his tears moved the murderers to compassion so far, that they promised to spare the life of one of them, whom they left to his choice; but whilst the distracted father ran first to one, then to another, not being able to abandon either of them, they growing impatient of delay massacred them both. The horror with which the news of this tragical scene filled the breast of St Ambrose and his colleagues is not to be expressed; but our saint thought it best to give the emperor a little time to reflect and enter

<sup>1</sup> Theodoret, lib. v. c. 17; St Aug. de Civ. Dei. lib. v. c. 29; St Ambr. Ep. 15; Paulin, &c.

into himself. The emperor was not then at Milan; but was to return in two or three days. St Ambrose, that he might not see him too soon, left the town and wrote him a very tender strong letter, which is extant, exhorting him to penance, and declaring that he neither could nor would receive his offering, or celebrate the divine mysteries before him, till that obligation was satisfied; for how much soever he loved and respected him, he gave preference to God; and he loved his majesty, not to his prejudice, but to his salvation.<sup>1</sup> Soon after the bishop came to town, and the emperor, according to his custom, went to church. But St Ambrose went out and met him at the church-porch, and forbidding him any further entrance said, "It seems, sir, that you do not yet rightly apprehend the enormity of the massacre lately committed. Let not the splendour of your purple robes hinder you from being acquainted with the infirmities of that body which they cover. You are of the same mould with those subjects which you govern; and there is one common Lord and Emperor of the world. With what eyes will you behold his temple? With what feet will you tread his sanctuary? How will you lift up to him in prayer those hands which are still stained with blood unjustly spilt? Depart, therefore, and attempt not by a second offence to aggravate your former crime; but quietly take the yoke upon you which the Lord has appointed for you. It is sharp, but it is medicinal and conducive to your health." The prince offered something by way of extenuation and said that David had sinned. The holy bishop replied, "Him whom you have followed in sinning, follow also in his repentance." Theodosius submitted, accepted the penance which the church prescribed, and retired to his palace where he passed eight months in mourning, without ever going into the church, and clad with penitential or mourning weeds. After this term, the feast of Christmas being come, he remained still shut up in his palace shedding many tears. Ruffinus, the master of the offices and prefect or comptroller of his household or palace, who was not baptized before the year 391, asked him the reason of his grief, and told him he had only punished criminals and had no cause to fall into depression of mind; for piety required not so cruel an affliction. Thus this courtier, after having induced his master to commit a crime, attempted by his flatteries to weaken his repentance. But the emperor, redoubling his tears and sighs, said to him, "Ruffinus, thou dost but make sport and mock me. Thou little knowest the anguish and trouble I feel. I weep and bewail my miserable condition. The Church of God is open to beggars and slaves; but the church doors, and consequently the gates of heaven too, are shut against me. For our Lord has peremptorily declared, 'Whatever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven.' " Ruffinus said, "If you please, I will run to the bishop and will use so many arguments with him, that I will persuade him to absolve you."

<sup>1</sup> St Ambr. Ep. 31.

The emperor answered, "It will not be in your power to do it. I know the justice of the sentence he has passed, and he is an inflexible man where the laws of religion are concerned and will never, out of respect to the imperial dignity, do anything against the law of God." He added, that it was better to finish his penance than vainly demand the favour of an over-hasty absolution. Ruffinus insisted upon it that he should prevail. Whereupon the emperor said, "Go quickly then." And, flattering himself with the hopes that Ruffinus had given him, he followed him soon after. St Ambrose no sooner saw the comptroller coming towards him, but he abruptly broke out and said, "Ruffinus, you carry your assurances and boldness beyond all bounds. You were the adviser and author of this massacre. How can you then intercede for another? You have laid aside all shame, and neither blush nor tremble at the remembrance of so great a crime and an assault made upon the image of God." Ruffinus fell to entreaties and besought the bishop with all possible earnestness, adding that the emperor would be there by and by. "If so," said the bishop, "I tell you plainly I shall forbid him to enter the church-porch. And if he think good to turn his power into force and tyranny, here I am, most ready to undergo any death and to present my throat to the sword." Ruffinus, seeing the resolution of the bishop, dispatched a messenger to the emperor, to inform him of what had passed and to advise him to stay at home. The prince received the information in the midst of the high street; but said, "I will go, and receive the affront and rebuke which I deserve." When he came to the inclosure of the holy place he did not go into the church; but went to the bishop, who was sitting in the auditory, and besought him to give him absolution. St Ambrose stood up and said, "What! do you come here to trample upon the holy laws of God?" "I respect them," said the emperor, "I will not enter the sacred porch contrary to the rules: but I beseech you to free me from these bonds; and not shut against me the door which the Lord hath opened to all penitents." The bishop said, "What penance have you done, after having been guilty of such a crime?" "It is your part," said the emperor, "to inform me what I ought to do; to prescribe the remedies and apply the plaster: and it is mine to submit and to comply with the prescriptions."<sup>1</sup> St Ambrose ordered him to place himself amongst the public penitents in the church. Sozomen assures us, that the emperor made a public confession of his sin: and St Ambrose, in his funeral oration, describes how he knelt at the church door and lay long prostrate in the rank of the penitents, repeating with David, "My soul hath cleaved to the pavement: O Lord, restore my life, according to thy word."<sup>2</sup> He remained in this posture beating his breast from time to time, tearing his hair and, with tears running down his cheeks, begged pardon of God, lamenting his sin

<sup>1</sup> Theodoret Hist. lib. v. c. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cviii.

in the sight of all the people, who were so touched at it as to weep along with him, and to pray a long while. St Ambrose enjoined him, before he gave him absolution, to draw up a law to cancel all decrees that are made in haste or passion, and to command a respite of thirty days before execution of all warrants or sentences which regard life or the forfeiture of estates, that it may be discovered if any surprise or passion had any part in it. This law the emperor forthwith commanded to be drawn up and signed it with his own hand, promising always to observe it. Such a law in part had been made by Gratian eight years before, with which this of Theodosius is now joined in one.<sup>1</sup> Theodosius, after his absolution, passed no day to his death on which he did not bewail afresh this offence into which he was drawn by surprise and through the instigation of others, as St Ambrose remarks.

Theodoret mentions another example of humility and religion which this great emperor showed whilst he was at Milan, which some moderns placed before and others after his penance.<sup>2</sup> It happened on a great festival that, having brought his offering to the altar, he remained within the rails of the sanctuary, that is, within the chancel or choir, St Ambrose asked him if he wanted anything. The emperor said he stayed to assist at the holy mysteries and to communicate. The bishop sent his archdeacon to him with this message: "My lord, it is lawful for none but the sacred ministers to remain within the sanctuary. Be pleased therefore to go out, and continue standing with the rest. The purple robe makes princes, but not priests." Theodosius answered that he stayed not with a design of doing anything against the church, or out of any affectation to distinguish himself from all the rest; but that he thought the custom was the same at Milan as at Constantinople, where his place was in the sanctuary; and, after having thanked the archbishop for being so kind as to inform him of his duty, he went out of the rails and took his place among the laity. At his return to Constantinople, on the first great holiday that he went to the great church, he went out of the sanctuary after he had made his offering. The Archbishop Nectarius sent to desire him to come back and resume the place designed for him. The pious emperor answered, with a sigh, "Alas! how hard is it for me to learn the difference between the priesthood and the empire! I am encompassed with flatterers, and have found but one man that has set me right and told me the truth. I know but one true bishop in the world; this is Ambrose." From that time he kept without the rails or chancel, a little above the people, in which he was imitated by succeeding emperors. Theodosius, after staying almost three years in the West, left Valentinian in peaceable possession of that empire, and would carry home no other recompence of his labours and victories than the glory of having restored that prince, and afforded

<sup>1</sup> Lib. xiii. Cod. Theod. de poen.

<sup>2</sup> Theodoret. Hist. Eb. v. c. 18; Sosom. Eb. vii. c. 24.

so many nations a disinterested protection. In his return into the East all the people came out to meet him with extraordinary joy, and his reception in every city on the road was a kind of triumph, especially at Constantinople, where he arrived on the 9th of November 391; and he appeared more glorious by the marks of love which he received of his subjects than by the victories he had gained over his enemies.

The young Valentinian followed in everything the advice and instructions of St Ambrose, honouring and loving him with as much ardour as his mother had formerly persecuted him with fury. Never was prince more ready to correct his faults. When he was told that he was too fond of the sports of the circus, he renounced those diversions except on indispensable occasions. When some said that his passion for hunting diverted his mind from business, he presently ordered all the wild beasts he kept in a park to be killed. It was said by some that he advanced the hour of his meal too early, out of intemperance: he made use of this advice, and became so abstemious that he fasted very often and ate but little, even in the magnificent entertainments which he provided for his courtiers. He eased his subjects of many burdens and taxes, and never imposed any new ones, saying the people were already too much oppressed. Yet Count Arbogastes, general of his forces, came to an open breach with him. This man was a Frank by birth, but had been brought up from his youth in the Roman army and was a pagan. By the great power to which he arrived, he assumed so much as to command Valentinian and dispose of all things at pleasure. The emperor at length resolved no longer to brook his imperious behaviour and bear with his insolence. In 392, when they were both together in Gaul, busy in securing the country against the Germans, their misintelligence was carried to the highest pitch. But at length a seeming peace was concluded. The emperor pressed St Ambrose to come to him at Vienne, in Gaul, to be a witness to their reconciliation, and he was desirous to be baptized by him, being then in the twentieth year of his age. In his impatience to see him and receive the holy sacrament of regeneration, he used often to say, "Shall I be so happy as to see my father?" He never had that happiness, being strangled by Arbogastes whilst he was diverting himself in the garden of his palace, on the banks of the Rhone, at Vienne, on the 15th of May 392. St Ambrose, who was advanced on his journey as far as the Alps, upon hearing this tragical news, returned to Milan, watering all his steps with his tears. Valentinian's corpse was buried with Gratian's at Milan, and St Ambrose pronounced his funeral oration, in which he largely proves that his desire of baptism supplied the want of it, and promises always to remember him in his sacrifices and prayers. Arbogastes placed the imperial diadem on the head of Eugenius, a rhetorician by profession, a man of parts and learning, who had long been in his service, and from an ignoble condition had been

raised to high undeserved honours. This man was a nominal Christian, but unsettled in religious principles; for he flattered the heathens and placed great confidence in divinations and auguries. They hastened their march into Italy and courted St Ambrose by very obliging letters; but before they arrived at Milan the holy bishop had retired to Bologna, where he assisted at the translation of the relics of SS. Vitalis and Agricola. Thence he went to Florence, where he consecrated a church, called afterwards the Ambrosian basilica, like another at Milan which was mentioned above. At Florence St Ambrose lived in the house of the most considerable among the citizens, named Decentius, whose infant child happened to die. The mother laid him upon the bed of St Ambrose while he was abroad. The saint, being returned, laid himself upon the child in imitation of Eliseus, and by his prayers restored him to life, as Paulinus assures us. Theodosius refused all terms proposed to him by Eugenius's ambassadors, and raised a powerful army to march against the traitors. He prepared himself for war by fasts, prayers, and frequent visiting of churches;<sup>1</sup> and he sent to implore the prayers of St John of Egypt. That holy hermit, who had formerly foretold him the defeat of Maximus, sent him an assurance that this enterprise against Eugenius would be more difficult than the former against Maximus had been, yet that he should obtain a complete victory, but should die shortly after.<sup>2</sup> Theodosius, before he set out, among many actions of heroic and public charity, justice, devotion, and piety, by a rescript inserted in the Roman law pardoned all injuries in word or action that had ever been committed against his person.

His army was assembled under Timasius, who commanded the Roman legions; Stilicho, a Vandal prince who had married Serena, the emperor's niece; Gainas, general of the Goths, &c. Theodosius joined them in Thrace, marched through Pannonia and Illyricum and forced the passes of the Alps, which Arbogastes had so fenced and guarded as to look upon as not only impregnable, but even inaccessible. Yet Arbogastes was not dismayed, and drew up his army in battalia in the spacious plains of Aquileia, at the foot of the Alps. In the first engagement Arbogastes gained the day; and in a second the army of Theodosius was upon the point of being broken and dispersed when, by a fervent prayer, he conjured God to defend the cause of his own divine honour.<sup>3</sup> Soon after there arose from the Alps an impetuous wind, which put the squadrons of the enemy into strange disorder, drove back their darts and arrows, and beat clouds of dust upon their faces, which deprived many of the use of their sight and almost of their respiration,<sup>4</sup> which gave Theodosius a complete victory. Theodoret<sup>5</sup> tells us that the prince, before this second battle, shut himself

<sup>1</sup> Sozom. lib. vii. c. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Evagr. Vit. Patr. c. 1; Theodoret. Hist. lib. v. c. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Rufin. lib. ii. c. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Claudian, in Paneg. Consul. Honor. Oros. lib. vii. c. 35; St Aug. lib. xxvi. de Civ. Dei. Rufin. Socr. Sozom. Theodoret.

<sup>5</sup> Theodor. lib. v. c. 24.

up one night in a church to pray and, falling asleep, saw in a vision two men on white horses, who promised him that they would assist him. The one was St Philip the apostle, the other St John the Evangelist. Evagrius and his companions taking leave of St John in Thebais, that holy man, giving them his blessing, said, " Go in peace, my dear children, and know that they hear this day in Alexandria that Theodosius has defeated the tyrant Eugenius. But this prince will not long enjoy the advantage of his victory, and God will ere long withdraw him out of this world."<sup>1</sup> Eugenius, who was seated on a hill near the field of battle, was taken and brought to Theodosius, who reproached him with his crimes and credulity in the promises of heathenish diviners, and commanded him to be beheaded on the 6th of September in 394. Arbogastes, after wandering two days in the mountains, became his own executioner, thrusting two swords, one after another, through his body. Theodosius pardoned all the rest of their party; and never was any prince more moderate in his victory. He knew how to pardon, scarce how to punish; and he seemed to forget that he had enemies as soon as he had overcome. Being informed that the children of Eugenius and Flavian (general of his Roman forces) had taken sanctuary in the churches of Aquileia, he sent a tribune with an order to save their lives. He took care to have them educated in the Christian religion, left possessions for them, and used them as if they had been of his own family. As this victory was rather God's than his own, his first care was that a solemn thanksgiving should be rendered to him throughout his whole empire. He wrote particularly to St Ambrose on that subject. This holy archbishop had returned to Milan as soon as Eugenius was departed thence; and upon receiving his letter with the news of his victory he offered the holy sacrifice in thanksgiving, and sent one of his deacons to him with letters in which, after having expressed his joy for the prosperity of his arms, he represented to him that he ought to give God the whole glory thereof, that piety had contributed more to it than valour, and that his victory was incomplete unless he pardoned those who were involved in the misfortune rather than in the crimes of the tyrant, to which mercy he strongly exhorted him.<sup>2</sup> This he besought in particular in favour of those who had taken refuge in the churches; which the saint doubted not of obtaining from a prince in whose behalf God had wrought prodigies, as he had formerly done in favour of Moses, Josue, Samuel, and David.<sup>3</sup> A little while after, St Ambrose went to Aquileia to wait upon the emperor. Their interview was full of joy and tenderness. The archbishop prostrated himself before this prince whom piety and the visible protection of God had rendered more venerable than his victories and crowns, and prayed that God would bestow on him all the blessings of heaven as he had loaded him with all the prosperity of the earth. The emperor, on his side, cast

<sup>1</sup> Evagr. lib. i. c. 1; Pallad. in Lausiac. c. 4.

<sup>2</sup> St Ambr. Ep. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 62.

himself at the feet of the archbishop, imputing to his prayers the favours which he had received from God, and entreating him to pray for his salvation, as he had done for his success. Then they entertained themselves about the means of restoring religion.

Theodosius soon followed St Ambrose to Milan, who was gone the day before; but the prince refrained some time from the holy communion because he had been stained with blood, though shed in a just and necessary war. In the meantime he studied by compunction to purify his soul, and was assaulted by a mortal dropsy which the fatigues of his expedition and the severity of winter had brought on him. He sent for his children to Milan, and would receive them in the church on the day on which he received the communion the first time after his wars. He gave his two sons excellent instructions how to govern well, then turning to St Ambrose he said, "These are the truths which you have taught me, and which I myself have experienced. It is your part to make them descend in my family, and to instruct, according to your custom, these young emperors whom I leave to you." The archbishop answered that he hoped God would give to the children a teachable heart and easy temper, which he had given the father. He granted and confirmed by law a general amnesty and pardon to all rebels who were returned to their duty, by which they were re-established in their estates and dignities. He discharged the people of the augmentations of tribute, desiring that his subjects might enjoy the advantage of a victory to which they had contributed by their prayers and labours. Nothing could be more pathetic than his last exhortations to those senators who still remained idolaters, that they would embrace the faith of Christ, in which he declared it to have been his greatest desire to make all his subjects faithful servants of Jesus Christ. He gave much of his time to his devotions and to pious conversation with St Ambrose, in whose arms he expired on the 17th of January, in the year 395, of his age the fiftieth. St Ambrose preached his funeral sermon on the fortieth day after his death, and his body was conveyed to Constantinople, and everywhere received with honours which rather resembled triumphs than funeral solemnities.

In the year 395 St Ambrose discovered the bodies of the holy martyrs Nazarius and Celus in a garden near Milan, and translated them into the basilica of the apostles, near the Roman gate. Their blood was gathered up with plaster and linen; and this was distributed to others as a precious relic.<sup>1</sup> A person possessed with a devil was delivered by St Ambrose at these relics, before which the devil tormented him till the saint bade him hold his peace. One who had counterfeited grants for the office of a tribune, the saint delivered to Satan; and even before the bishop had done speaking, the unclean spirit seized on him and began to

<sup>1</sup> Paulin. in vit. Ambros. n. 32; St Aug. Ep. 31, et Ep. 7, alias Ep. 46; St Paulin. Natal. 9; St Gaudent, Serm. 17, p. 90; Bibl. Patr. Ennod. Carm. 18.

tear him: "At which," saith the secretary Paulinus, "we were all much terrified." He adds, "We saw in those days many dispossessed at his command, and by the laying on of his hands." He also mentions sick persons who were cured by his prayers. The reputation of St Ambrose reached the most distant countries.

A little before our saint's death, Fritigil, Queen of the Marcomanni, having heard of the fame of his sanctity from a certain Christian that came from Italy, was moved by it to believe in Jesus Christ, and sent ambassadors to him with presents for the Church of Milan, entreating St Ambrose to instruct her by writing in what she was to believe. He sent her an excellent letter in form of a catechism, which is now lost. The queen having received it, persuaded the king to submit himself and his people to the Romans, and went herself to Milan; but to her great affliction did not find St Ambrose alive.

Our holy bishop made the administration of the sacrament of penance a chief part of his pastoral care. Paulinus writes thus of him: "Whenever any person confessed their sins to him in order to receive penance, he shed such an abundance of tears as to make the penitent also to weep. The sins which were confessed to him he never disclosed to anyone, only interceded with God."<sup>1</sup> In his writings he explains in a great detail all the parts and duties of penance. Speaking of the obligation of confessing sins, he says: "If thou wilt be justified, confess thy crime: for an humble confession loosens the bonds of sins."<sup>2</sup> Against the Novatian heresy St Ambrose wrote his two books of Penance. In the first, he shows that absolution is to be given to penitents for all sins, however grievous. But, towards the end, observes that their penitence must be condign and sincere. "If anyone," says he, "be guilty of *secret* sins, and does penance for them very heartily, in obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ, how shall he receive the reward unless he be restored to the communion of the church? I would have the guilty hope for the pardon of his sins; yet he should beg it with tears, sighs, and the lamentations of all the people. I would have him pray for absolution; and when it is twice or thrice delayed, let him believe that this delay proceeds from the want of importunity in his prayers. Let him redouble his weeping; let him render himself more worthy of pity; and then let him return, let him throw himself at the feet of the faithful, let him embrace them, kiss them, bathe them with his tears; and let him not forsake them, that so our Lord may say to him, 'Many sins are forgiven him because he loved much.'" In the second book, after answering some objections of the Novatians, he shows that penance is false and fruitless without a total change of heart and manners, in which its very essence consists. "There are others," says he, "who may be immediately restored to communion. These do not so

<sup>1</sup> Paulin. n. 39.

<sup>2</sup> St Ambr. lib. ii. de Poenit. c. 6, n. 40.

much desire to be loosed as to bind the priest; for they do not unburden their own conscience, but burden that of the priest, who is commanded not to give holy things to dogs, that is, not easily to admit impure souls to communion. I have found more persons who have preserved the innocence of their baptism than who have done penance as they should do after they have lost it. They must renounce the world and allow less time for sleep than nature requires; they must break their sleep with groaning and sighing, and employ part of that time in prayers; they must live in such a manner as to be dead to the use of this life; let such men deny themselves and change themselves wholly," &c. St Ambrose exhorts the faithful to very frequent communion, because the holy eucharist is our spiritual bread and daily nourishment, not a poison. In his book, *On the Mysteries*, composed in 387, he instructs the new baptized, expounding the ceremonies of baptism and confirmation, and the sacrament of the holy eucharist, which he does in the clearest terms. That this book *On the Mysteries* is the undoubted work of our holy doctor is manifest, not only from the unanimous consent of authors, but also from the first part of this book itself. After having explained the ancient types of the eucharist, as the sacrifice of Melchisedech, the manna, and the water flowing out of the rock, he adds: " You will say, perhaps, I see something else: how can I be sure that I receive the body of Christ? Prove that it is not what hath been formed by nature, but what the benediction hath consecrated, and that the benediction is more powerful than nature, because it changes even nature itself." He urges the incarnation, which mystery he compares to that of the eucharist. " A virgin," says he, " brought forth. This is contrary to the order of nature. The body which we consecrate came forth of a virgin: why do you seek for the order of nature in the body of Jesus Christ, since Jesus Christ was born of a virgin against the order of nature. Jesus Christ had real flesh which was fastened to the cross and laid in the sepulchre. So the eucharist is the true sacrament of this flesh. Christ himself assures us of it. ' This is,' says he, ' my body.' " The saint recommends to the new believers to keep the mysteries secret. St Austin, who was baptized by St Ambrose in 387, must have been present at these discourses which St Ambrose then made to the neophytes. St Ambrose was particularly careful in the choice of his clergy. This appears from several instances which the saint himself relates. One of his friends he would never be prevailed upon to admit among the clergy, on account of some levity in his carriage. Another, who was one of the clergy, he forbade ever to walk before him on a like account; for he was persuaded that such faults proceed from an irregularity of the mind.<sup>1</sup> He forbids the clergy to intermeddle with business or traffic, wishing them to be contented with their small patrimony, or, if they have none, with their salaries.<sup>2</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> St Ambr. lib. i. ; Offic. c. 18, n. 72.

<sup>2</sup> St Ambr. lib. i. c. 36, n. 184.

order to regulate the manners of the clergy, that they might be the light of the world, he composed, in 386, three books On the Offices of the Ministers; in which, however, he often descends to general precepts of morality adapted to Christians of all denominations.

One of St Ambrose's last actions was the ordination of St Honoratus, Bishop of Vercelli. A few days before he fell sick he foretold his death, but said he should live till Easter. Before he took his bed he continued his usual studies, and expounded the forty-third psalm. Whilst he dictated this exposition, Paulinus, who was his amanuensis, looking up, saw a flame in the form of a small shield covering his head, and by degrees creeping into his mouth; upon which his face became white as snow, though soon after it returned to its usual complexion. "I was so affrighted thereat," says Paulinus, "that I remained without motion, and could not write what he dictated till the vision was over. He was then repeating a passage of scripture which I well remember; and on that day he left off both writing and reading, so that he could not finish the psalm." We have this exposition of St Ambrose upon the forty-third psalm, which ends at the twenty-fifth verse, and nothing is said upon the two last. He must have been already sick; for Paulinus assures us that when he was well he never spared the pains of writing his books with his own hand. After having ordained a bishop of Pavia, he was taken so ill that he kept his bed a long time. Upon this news, Count Stilicho, the guardian and prime minister of Honorius who governed the western empire, was much troubled and said publicly, "The day that this great man dies, destruction hangs over Italy." And therefore sending for as many of the nobility and magistrates of the city as he knew had the greatest interest and sway with the bishop, he persuaded them to go to him, and by all means prevail with him to beg of God a longer life. They went and, standing about his bed, with tears entreated him to intercede with heaven for his own life for the sake of others; to whom he answered, "I have not so behaved myself among you that I should be ashamed to live longer; nor am I afraid to die, because we have a good master." He lay in a gallery, at the end whereof were four deacons discoursing together who might succeed him. They spoke so low that they could hardly hear each other. Yet, when they named Simplician, the bishop, though at a distance, cried out three times, "He is old, but good." At which they were so surprised that they hastened out of the place. As St Ambrose was praying in the same place, he beheld Jesus Christ coming toward him with a smiling countenance. This he told Bassianus, Bishop of Lodi, who was praying with him, and from him Paulinus learned it. The saint died a few days after. The day on which he expired, he lay with his hands extended in form of a cross for several hours, moving his lips in constant prayer, though it could not be understood what he said. St Honoratus, Bishop of Vercelli, was there, and, being gone into an upper

chamber to take a little rest, heard a voice crying three times to him, "Arise, and make haste; for he is going to depart." He went down and gave him the body of our Lord, which the saint had no sooner swallowed but he gave up the ghost.<sup>1</sup> St Ambrose died about midnight before Holy Saturday, the 4th of April, in 397; he was about fifty-seven years old, and had been bishop twenty-two years and four months.<sup>2</sup> The common suffrage of all antiquity has ranked him among the four great doctors of the Latin church.<sup>3</sup> His feast is kept on the 7th of December, the day on which he was ordained bishop; and he is honoured on the same not only in the western calendars, but also in those of the Oriental church. The body of St Ambrose reposes in a vault under the high altar in the Ambrosian basilica at Milan; it was first interred near the relics of SS. Gervasius and Protasius. God was pleased to honour him by manifesting that through his intercession he protected the state against the idolaters. Radagaisus, a king of the Goths, a pagan, threatened the destruction of Christianity and the ruin of the Roman empire, which he invaded with an army, it is said, of two hundred thousand, others say four hundred thousand, men, about the year 405. Tillemont gives the following relation: "Radagaisus besieged Florence. This city was reduced to the utmost straits when St Ambrose, who had once retired thither (and who had now been dead nine years), appeared to a person of the house where he had lodged, and promised him that the city should be delivered from the enemy the next day. The man told it to the inhabitants, who took courage and resumed the hopes which they had quite lost; and on the next day came Stilicho with his army. Paulinus, who relates this, learned it from a lady who lived at Florence." Though the forces of the Emperor Honorius were too weak to oppose this torrent, at their approach Radagaisus was struck with a sudden panic and fled, and his scattered troops were taken and sold like droves of cattle.

St Ambrose joined together in the conduct of his life a wonderful generosity and inflexibility, where the divine law was concerned, with all possible prudence and moderation; yet in all his actions tempered the boldness and authority of a bishop with an air of sweetness and charity. By this he gained all hearts, and his inflexible severity in points of duty appeared amiable and mild, whilst everyone saw that it proceeded wholly from the most tender charity. St Austin tells us that in his first interview, when he was a stranger to St Ambrose and enslaved to the world and his passions, he was won by him because he saw in him a good eye and a kind countenance, the index of his benevolent heart. "I saw a man affectionate and kind to me," says he. When a friend shows by his words and behaviour that he has sincerely and only our interest at heart, this

<sup>1</sup> Paulin. n. 47.

<sup>2</sup> See Pagi ad an. 397.

<sup>3</sup> These four doctors are St Jerom, St Ambrose, St Augustine, and St Gregory the Great.

<sup>4</sup> Tillemont, Hist. des Emp. t. v. p. 540.

opens all the avenues of our mind, and strengthens and enforces his admonitions, so that they never fail to make deep impressions. They who speak affectionately and from their hearts speak powerfully to the hearts of others. This is the property of true charity, the most essential qualification of a minister of Christ, who is dead to the world and himself, and seeks no interest but that of Christ and his neighbour in the salvation of souls.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 7:*

ST AMBROSE, Doctor of the Church and Bishop of Milan in the fourth century; he holds a very high place in the history of Latin literature; he was thirty-four years old when he was made a bishop, whereupon he broke all ties with the world and gave all he possessed to the poor: ST FARÀ, Abbess, in the seventh century.

#### DECEMBER 8

### THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

So great are the advantages we reap from the incarnation of the Son of God that to contemplate it, and to thank and praise him for the same, ought to be the primary object of all our devotions and the employment of our whole lives. In the feast of the Conception of the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God we celebrate the joyful dawning of that bright day of mercy, the first appearance which that most glorious of all pure creatures made in the world, with those first seeds of grace which produced the most admirable fruit in her soul. Her conception was itself a glorious mystery, a great grace, and the first effect of her predestination. Her Divine Son, the eternal God, in the first moment of her being, considered the sublime dignity to which he had decreed to raise her, and remembered that august, dear, sacred, and venerable name of his mother, which she was one day to bear; and he beheld her with a complacency, and distinguished her in a manner, suitable to so near a relation she was to bear. He called her not his servant in whom he gloried, as he did Israel,<sup>1</sup> but his mother, whom for the sake of his own glory he decreed exceedingly to exalt in grace and glory. From that instant the eternal Word of God, which was to take flesh of her, looked upon it as particularly incumbent on him, in the view of his future incarnation, to sanctify this virgin, to enrich her with his choicest gifts, and to heap upon her the most singular favours with a profusion worthy his omnipotence. From that very moment he prepared her to be his most holy tabernacle. When Almighty God commanded a temple to be built to his honour in Jerusalem, what preparations did he not ordain! What purity did he not require in the things that belonged to that work, even in the persons and materials that were employed in it! David, though a great saint, was excepted against by

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xlix. 3.

God, because he had been stained with blood spilt in just wars. Again, what purifications, consecrations, rites, and ceremonies did he not order to sanctify all the parts of the building! This for a material temple, in which the ark was to be placed, and men were to offer their homages and sacrifices to his adorable Majesty. What, then, did he not do for Mary in spiritually decking her, whose chaste womb was to be his living tabernacle, from whose pure flesh he was to derive his own most holy body, and of whom he would himself be born!

The first condition in the spiritual embellishing of a soul is perfect purity, or cleanliness from whatever can be a blot or stain in her. A skilful statuary is careful, in the first place, that there be no irregularity or deformity in the piece which he is going to carve. Almighty God therefore was pleased to preserve this holy Virgin from contracting any stain of sin, whether original or actual. Without the privilege of an extraordinary grace, the greatest saints daily fall into venial sins of surprise and inadvertence, through a neglect of a universal watchfulness over all the secret motions of their hearts in the course of action. But Mary was distinguished by this rare privilege, and by the succour of an extraordinary grace was so strengthened that her interior beauty was never sullied with the least spot, and charity or the divine love never suffered the least remission or abatement in her soul; but from the moment in which she attained the use of reason, increased, and she continually pressed forward with fresh ardour towards the attainment of higher perfection in virtue and holiness. Her exemption from original sin was yet a more extraordinary privilege of grace. It is an undoubted truth<sup>1</sup> that she was sanctified and freed from original sin before she was born, and that she was brought into this world in a state of perfect sanctity. It is defined as an article of faith that in her very conception she was immaculate. It is needless here to produce the passages of holy scripture usually alleged by theologians, and other proofs by which this doctrine is confirmed. It is founded in the clear testimonies of the most illustrious among the fathers, in the decrees of several particular councils, and the suffrages of most learned and eminent masters of the theological schools. The very respect which we owe to the Mother of God, and the honour which is due to her divine Son, incline us to believe this privilege most suitable to her state of spotless sanctity. St Austin thought this reason sufficient for exempting her, whenever mention is made of sin. "Out of reverence," says he, "and for the honour which is due to her Son, I will have no question put about her when we speak of any sin."<sup>2</sup> Christ was no less her Redeemer, Reconciler, and most perfect Saviour and Benefactor, by preserving her from this stain, than he would have been by cleansing her from it: as by descending from

<sup>1</sup> A few sentences of the author have been altered here, in consequence of the solemn definition of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1854.—*Editor.*

<sup>2</sup> St Aug. 1, de Nat. et Grat. c. 36, n. 42, p. 144.

Adam she was liable to this debt, and would have contracted the contagion had she not been preserved from it through the grace and merits of her Son.

To understand how great a grace and how singular a prerogative this total exemption from all sin was in Mary, we may take a survey of the havoc that monster made amongst men from the beginning of the world, excepting Mary. The most holy amongst the saints all received their existence in sin; they were all obliged to say with St Paul, " We were the children of wrath, even as the rest."<sup>1</sup> The fall of our first father Adam involved all mankind in guilt and misery. From that time, for the space of four thousand years, sin reigned without control on every side. By its dire effects the greatest part of the world was plunged into the most frightful state of spiritual darkness and blindness. Even the sons of light were born under its slavery; Abraham, Moses, Elias, Jeremy, Job, and all the other saints confessed with David, " Behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sin my mother conceived me."<sup>2</sup> Sin was become a universal leprosy, a contagion which no one could escape; an evil common to all mankind, and infecting every particular individual that descended from Adam. It was communicated with the flesh and blood which men received from their parents, and from their first father Adam. Every child contracted this infection with the first principle of life. Mary, by a singular privilege, was exempted from it, and entered a world of sin spotless and holy.

The grace which exempted Mary from original sin preserved her also from the sting of concupiscence, or inordinate love of creatures, and tendency to evil. The first sin of Adam brought on us a deluge of evils, and by the two wounds of ignorance and concupiscence which it has left in us its malignity has spread its influence over all the powers of our souls. Through it our understanding is liable to be deceived and to be led away with errors; our will is abandoned to the assaults of the basest passions: our senses are become inlets of dangerous suggestions: we are subjected to spiritual weakness, inconstancy, and vanity, and are tyrannized over by inordinate appetites. Hence proceeds in us a difficulty in doing good, a repugnance to our duties, a proneness to evil, the poisoned charm of vice, and the intestine war of the flesh against the spirit. All this we experience and groan under; yet under the weight of such miseries, by a much greater evil, we are blind, proud, and insensible. We court our dangers, indulge and fortify our enemies, and caress and adore those idols which we are bound to destroy. To procure for ourselves some part in the blessing which Mary enjoyed, in the empire over our passions, we must check them, restrain our senses, and die to ourselves. We must never cease sighing to God, to implore his aid against this domestic enemy, and never enter into any truce with him. " Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak; heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled."<sup>3</sup> If our weakness and dangers call for our

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. x. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. l. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. vii. 3.

tears, we have still much greater reason to weep for our guilt and repeated transgressions. Whereas grace in Mary triumphed even over original sin; we, on the contrary, even after baptism and penance, by which we were cleansed from sin, return to it again, increase our hereditary weakness and miseries; and, what is of all things most grievous, infinitely aggravate our guilt by daily offences. "Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes?"<sup>1</sup> O, Mother of Mercy, let your happy privilege, your exemption from all sin and concupiscence, inspire you with pity for our miseries: and by your spotless purity and abundant graces obtain for us strength against all our dangers, the deliverance from all our miseries, and the most powerful remedies of divine grace.

Mary, in her conception, was not only free from stain, but moreover was adorned with the most precious graces, so as to appear beautiful and glorious in the eyes of God. And the grace she then received was the seed of the great virtues which she exercised, and the higher graces to which, by the improvement of her first stock, she was afterwards raised, during the whole course of her mortal life. By the first graces she was free from all inclination to accursed pride and from all inordinate self-love, and remained always perfectly empty of herself. This disposition she expressed when honoured with the highest graces and exalted to the most sublime and wonderful spiritual dignity; under which, sinking lower in her own abyss of weakness and nothingness, she sincerely and purely gave all glory to him. She confessed aloud that he chose her not for any merit, or anything he saw in her, but because he would signalize his omnipotence by choosing the weakest and meanest instrument, and because he saw in her the nothingness in which he most fitly exerted and manifested his infinite power and greatness. By a lurking pride we obstruct the designs of the divine mercy in our favour. The vessel of our heart cannot receive the plentiful effusion of divine grace so long as it is filled with the poison of self-love. The more perfectly it is cleansed and empty, the more is it fitted to receive. As the prophet called for vessels that were empty, that they might be filled with miraculous oil; so must we present to God hearts that are perfectly empty, when we pray that he replenish them with his grace. The exercise of humility, meekness, patience, resignation, obedience, self-denial, rigorous self-examination, compunction, and penance begin the work: but prayer and divine love perfect the cleansing of the fountain from which they spring. Thus are we to attain that purity of heart and affections by which we shall bear some degree of resemblance to the holy Mother of God. This grace we ought earnestly to beg of God, through her intercession, and particularly to commend to him, through her, the preservation of the holy virtue of purity.

The Immaculate Conception of the holy Mother of God was not only

in itself a great and glorious mystery, but likewise joyful to mankind. Certain glimmerings of the benefit of our Redemption had gone before from the fall of Adam in several revelations, types, and figures; in which the distant prospect of this wonderful mercy filled the patriarchs and other saints of the old law with comfort and holy joy. But the conception of Mary displayed the first rays of its approaching light, and may be said to have been its rising morning, or the dawning of its day. In this mystery she appeared pure and glorious, shining among the daughters of Adam as a "lily among thorns."<sup>1</sup> To her from the moment of her conception God said, "Thou art all beautiful, my love, and there is no spot in thee."<sup>2</sup> She was the "enclosed garden," which the serpent could never enter; and the "sealed fountain," which he never defiled.<sup>3</sup> She was the throne and the tabernacle of the true Solomon, and the ark of the testament to contain, not corruptible manna, but the Author of the incorruptible life of our souls. Saluting her with these epithets, in exultation and praise, let us sing with the church, "This is the Conception of the glorious Virgin Mary, of the seed of Abraham, sprung from the tribe of Juda, illustrious of the house of David, whose life, by its brightness, illustrates all churches."<sup>4</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 8 :*

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, a festival which commemorates the unique prerogative of Mary, designed to fit her for her high destiny as the Mother of God : ST ROMARIC, Abbot, in the seventh century.

#### DECEMBER 9

#### THE SEVEN MARTYRS AT SAMOSATA

IN the year 297 the Emperor Maximian, returning victorious from the defeat of the Persian army, celebrated the quinquennial games at Samosata, the capital of Syria Comagene, upon the banks of the Euphrates. On this occasion he commanded all the inhabitants to repair to the temple of Fortune, situate in the middle of the city, to assist at the solemn supplications and sacrifices which were there to be made to the gods. The whole town echoed with the sound of trumpets, and was infected with the smell of victims and incense. Hipparchus and Philotheus, persons for birth and fortune of the first rank in the city, had some time before embraced the Christian faith. In a secret closet in the house of Hipparchus, upon the eastern wall, they had made an image of the cross before which, with their faces turned to the east, they adored the Lord Jesus Christ seven times a day. Five intimate friends, much younger in years, named James, Paragrus, Habibus, Romanus, and Lollianus, coming to visit them at the ninth hour, or three in the afternoon, found them in this private chamber praying before the cross, and asked them why they were in mourning and prayed at home, at a time wher, by the emperor's orders, all the gods of the whole city

<sup>1</sup> Cant. xi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cant. iv. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Cant. iv. 12.

<sup>4</sup> The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was solemnly defined by Pope Pius IX in The Bull "Ineffabilis Deus," Dec. 8, 1854.

had been transported into the temple of Fortune, and all persons were commanded to assemble there to pray. They answered that they adored the Maker of the world. James said, "Do you take that cross for the Maker of the world? for I see it is adored by you." Hipparchus answered, "Him we adore who hung upon the cross. Him we confess to be God, and the Son of God begotten, not made, co-essential with the Father, by whose deity we believe this whole world is created, preserved, and governed. It is now the third year since we were baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by James, a priest of the true faith, who since has never intermitted from time to time to give us the Body and Blood of Christ. We therefore think it unlawful for us during these three days to stir out of doors: for we abhor the smell of victims with which the whole city is infected." After much discourse together, the five young noblemen declared they desired to be baptized, but feared the severity of the laws, saying these two were protected by their dignities in the magistracy and their favour at court; but that as for themselves, they were young and without protection. Hipparchus and Philotheus said, "The earthen vessel or brick is but dirt till it be tempered with clay and has passed the fire." And they discoursed so well on martyrdom, and on the contempt of the world, which faith inspireth, that the five young men desired to be baptized, and to bear the badge of Christ, confessing that when they first saw their two friends at prayer before the cross they felt an unusual fire glowing within their breasts. Hipparchus and Philotheus at first advised them to defer their baptism; but at length, pleased with their ardour, they dispatched a messenger to the priest James, with a letter sealed with their own seal, the contents of which were as follows: "Be pleased to come to us as soon as possible, and bring with you a vessel of water, a host, and a horn of oil for anointing. Your presence is earnestly desired by certain tender sheep which are come over to our fold, and are impatient that its mark be set upon them." James forthwith covered the sacred utensils with his cloak, and coming to the house found the seven blessed men on their knees at prayer. Saluting them, he said "Peace be with you, servants of Jesus Christ, who was crucified for his creatures." They all arose, and James, Paragrus, Habibus, Romanus, and Lollianus fell at his feet and said "Have pity on us, and give us the mark of Christ, whom you adore." He asked them if they were ready to suffer tribulation and torments for Christ, who suffered first for them. They answered with one voice that nothing should ever be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. He then bade them join him in prayer. When they had prayed together on their knees for the space of an hour, the priest rose up and, saluting them, said "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." When they had made a confession of their faith and abjured idolatry, he baptized them and immediately gave them the Body and Blood of Christ.

On the third day of the festival, the emperor inquired whether none among the magistrates contemned the gods, and whether they had all performed the duty of sacrificing on this public occasion. He was answered that Hipparchus and Philotheus had for three years past constantly absented themselves from the public worship of the gods. Hereupon the emperor gave orders that they should be conducted to the temple of Fortune and compelled to offer sacrifice. The messengers, coming to the house of Hipparchus, found the seven above mentioned assembled together; but at first apprehended only Hipparchus and Philotheus. The emperor asked them why they contemned both him and the immortal gods? Hipparchus said, "I blush to hear wood and stones called gods." The emperor commanded that he should receive fifty stripes, with whips loaded with leaden plummets, on the back, and then be confined in a dark dungeon. Philotheus being presented before him, the emperor promised to make him *prætor*, and to bestow on him other preferments, if he complied. The confessor replied that honours upon such terms would be an ignominy, and that he esteemed disgrace suffered for Christ the greatest of all honours. He then began to explain the creation of the world, and spoke with great eloquence. The emperor interrupted him, saying he saw that he was a man of learning, and that he would not put him to the torture, hoping that his own reason would convince him of his errors. But he gave orders that he should be put in irons, and confined in a separate dungeon from that in which Hipparchus was detained. In the meantime an order was sent to seize the other five that were found with them. The emperor put them in mind that they were in the flower of their age, and exhorted them not to despise the blessings of life. They answered that faith in Christ is preferable to life, adding that no treacherous artifices should draw them from their duty to God: "Especially," said they, "as we carry in our bodies the Body and Blood of Christ. Our bodies are consecrated by the touch of his Body; nor ought bodies which have been made holy to be prostituted by offering an outrageous affront to the dignity to which they have been raised." The emperor entreated them to have pity on their youth and not throw away their lives, swearing by the gods that if they persisted in their obstinacy they should be unmercifully beaten and should miserably perish. He repeated they should be crucified like their master. Their answer was that they were not affrighted with torments. The emperor ordered that they should be chained and kept in separate dungeons, without meat or drink, till the festival should be over.

The solemnity which was celebrated for several days in honour of the gods being concluded, the emperor caused a tribunal to be erected without the walls of the city, in a meadow near the banks of the Euphrates, and the fields thereabouts were covered with rich hangings like tents. Maximian having taken his seat, by his order the confessors were brought before him.

The two old magistrates were first led by chains thrown about their necks; the other five followed them, all having their hands tied behind their backs. Upon their peremptory refusal to offer sacrifice, they were all stretched upon the rack, and each received twenty stripes upon his back and was then scourged with thongs upon the breast and belly. This being done, they were carried back, each to his own dungeon, with strict orders that no one should be allowed to see them or send them anything to comfort or support them, and that they should be furnished by their keepers with just so much coarse bread as would keep them alive. In this condition they lay from the 15th of April to the 25th of June. Then they were again brought before the emperor, but looked more like carcasses than living men. He told them, that if they would comply, he would cause their hair to be shorn, and would have them washed in the bath, carried to the palace and re-established in their dignities. They all prayed that he would not seek to draw them from the way which Jesus Christ had opened to them. The emperor, whose eyes sparkled with fury upon hearing this answer said, "Wretches! you seek death: your desire is granted, that you may at length cease to insult the gods." He then commanded that cords should be put across their mouths and bound round them, and that they should be crucified. The cords were immediately put in their mouths and fastened tight about their bodies, so that they could only mutter broken words and not speak distinctly. In this condition, however, they returned thanks to God and encouraged one another, rejoicing that they were leaving this miserable world to go to God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. They were immediately hurried toward the tetradian, the common place of execution, at some distance from the city, and were followed by a long train of relations, friends, servants, and others, who filled the fields on the way, and rent the air with their lamentations. In the meantime the lords of that territory, Tiberianus, Gallus, Longinianus, Felicianus, Proclus, Cosmianus, Mascolianus, and Priscus, to whom, by an imperial writ, the government of the city was committed, waited on the emperor in a body, and represented to him that a great multitude of citizens followed the prisoners all in tears, grieved to see seven princes of their country led chained to a cruel and ignominious death; they alleged that Hipparchus and Philotheus were their colleagues in the magistracy, who ought to settle their accounts and the public affairs which had been left in their hands; that the other five were senators of their city, who ought to be allowed at least to make their wills; they therefore begged that some respite might be granted them. The emperor readily assented, and gave order that the martyrs should be put into the hands of these magistrates for the aforesaid purposes. The magistrates led them into the porch of the circus, and having taken the cords from their mouths, privately said to them, "We obtained this liberty under pretence of settling with you

the public accounts and civil affairs; but in reality to have the favour of speaking to you in private, begging your intercession with God, for whom you die, and desiring your blessing for this city and ourselves." The martyrs gave their blessing, and harangued the people that were assembled. The emperor was informed, and sent a reprimand to the magistrates for suffering the martyrs to speak to the people. Their excuse was, that they durst not forbid it for fear of a tumult.

The emperor ascending his tribunal would again see the martyrs; but found their resolution unshaken. He therefore ordered seven crosses to be erected over against the gate of the city, and again conjured Hipparchus to obey. The venerable old man, laying his hand upon his bald head, said, "As this, according to the course of nature, cannot be again covered with hair, so never shall I change or conform to your will on this point." Maximian commanded a goat's skin to be fastened with sharp nails upon his head; then jeering said, "See, your bald pate is now covered with hair; sacrifice, therefore, according to the terms of your own condition." The martyrs were hoisted on their crosses; and at noon several ladies came out of the city, and having bribed the guards with money, obtained leave to wipe the faces of the martyrs, and to receive their blood with sponges and linen cloths. Hipparchus died on the cross in a short time. James, Romanus, and Lollianus expired the next day, being stabbed by the soldiers whilst they hung on their crosses. Philotheus, Habibus, and Paragrus were taken down from their crosses whilst they were living. The emperor being informed that they were yet alive, commanded huge nails to be driven into their heads. This was executed with such cruelty that their brains were thrust out through their noses and mouths. Maximian ordered that their bodies should be dragged by the feet and thrown into the Euphrates. But Bassus, a rich Christian, redeemed them privately from the guards for seven hundred denarij, and buried them in the night at his farm in the country. The Acts of their martyrdom were compiled by a priest, who says he was present in a mean garb when the holy martyrs gave their blessing to their citizens. See these authentic acts, written by the priest who was eye-witness to their sufferings, published in Chaldaic by Steph. Assemani, *Act. Mart.* t. ii. p. 123.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 9:*

ST FELIX OF VALOIS is honoured in England on this date: ST LEOCADIA, martyr, highly revered in Spain. She was a native of Toledo and was greatly tormented for the faith. She died in prison praying to be united to her friend St Eulalia, after she had heard of the glorious death of that servant of God. ST PETER FOURIER: known as "the good father of Mattaincourt," his birth-place, of which he became the parish priest. By his prayers, teaching and example he restored religion to a corrupt district. He instituted a mutual help bank as well as pious societies, founded the Order of Notre Dame to teach poor girls, reformed the Canons Regular in Lorraine and brought back many Calvinists to the faith. This saint called all Protestants "poor strangers." He died in exile and was canonized in 1897: THE SEVEN MARTYRS OF SAMOSATA (297). These were ST HIPPARCHUS, ST PHILOTHEA, ST JAMES, ST PARAGRUS, ST HABEBUS, ST ROMANUS and ST LOLLIANUS, the two first being noblemen and the last-named five much younger persons of consequence in Samosata, on the banks of the Euphrates: and ST WULFILDE, Abbess (990).

DECEMBER 10  
ST MELCHIADES, POPE  
(A.D. 314)

[From Eus. lib. ix. c. 9; St Optat. lib. i.; St Aug. See Tillemont.]

MELCHIADES, or MELTIADES, succeeded Eusebius in the see of Rome, being chosen on the 2nd of July 311, in the reign of Maxentius. Constantine vanquished that tyrant on the 28th of October, in 312, and soon after issued edicts by which he allowed Christians the free exercise of their religion and the liberty of building churches. To pacify the minds of the pagans, who were uneasy at this innovation, when he arrived at Milan in the beginning of the year 313, he by a second edict ensured to all religions except heresies, liberty of conscience. Among the first laws which he enacted in favour of Christians, he passed one to exempt the clergy from the burden of civil offices. He obliged all his soldiers to repeat on Sundays a prayer addressed to the one only God; and no idolater could scruple at such a practice. The good pope rejoiced exceedingly at the prosperity of God's house and, by his zealous labours, very much extended its pale; but he had the affliction to see it torn by an intestine division in the Donatist schism, which blazed with great fury in Africa. Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, being falsely accused of having delivered up the sacred scriptures to be burnt in the time of the persecution, Donatus, Bishop of Casanigra, in Numidia, most unreasonably separated himself from his communion, and continued his schism when Cecilian had succeeded Mensurius in the see of Carthage, and was joined by many jealous enemies of that good prelate, especially by the powerful Lady Lucilla, who was personally piqued against Cecilian whilst he was deacon of that church. The schismatics appealed to Constantine, who was then in Gaul, and entreated him to commission three Gaulish bishops, whom they specified, to judge their cause against Cecilian. The emperor granted them these judges they demanded, but ordered the aforesaid bishops to repair to Rome, by letter entreating Pope Melchiades to examine into the controversy, together with these Gaulish bishops, and to decide it according to justice and equity. The emperor left to the bishops the decision of this affair, because it regarded a bishop. Pope Melchiades opened a council in the Lateran palace on the 2nd of October 313, at which both Cecilian and Donatus of Casanigra were present; and the former was pronounced by the pope and his council innocent of the whole charge that was brought against him. Donatus of Casanigra was the only person who was condemned on that occasion; the other bishops who had adhered to him were allowed to keep their sees upon their renouncing the schism. St Austin, speaking of the moderation which the pope used, calls him an excellent man, a true son of peace, and a true father of Christians.

Yet the Donatists, after his death, had recourse to their usual arms of slander to asperse his character, and pretended that this pope had delivered the scriptures into the hands of the persecutors; which St Austin calls a groundless and malicious calumny. St Melchiades died on the 10th of January 314, having sat two years, six months, and eight days, and was buried on the Appian road in the cemetery of Calixtus; is named in the Roman Martyrology, and in those of Bede, Ado, Usuard, &c. In some calendars he is styled a martyr, doubtless on account of his sufferings in preceding persecutions.

This holy pope saw a door opened by the peace of the church to the conversion of many, and he rejoiced at the triumph of the cross of Christ. But with worldly prosperity a worldly spirit too often broke into the sanctuary itself, insomuch that the zealous pastor had sometimes reason to complain with Isaiah, "Thou hast multiplied the nation, and hast not increased my joy."<sup>1</sup> Under the pressures of severe persecution, the true spirit of our holy religion was maintained in many among its professors during the first ages; yet, amidst the most holy examples and under the influence of the strongest motives and helps, avarice and ambition insinuated themselves into the hearts of some who, by the abuse of the greatest graces, became of all others the most abandoned to wickedness; witness Judas the Apostate in the college of the apostles, also several amongst the disciples of the primitive saints, as Simon Magus, Paul of Samosata, and others. But with temporal honours and affluence, the love of the world, though most severely condemned by Christ, as the capital enemy to his grace and holy love, and the source of all vicious passions, crept into the hearts of many, to the utter extinction of the Christian spirit in their souls. This, indeed, reigns, and always will reign in a great number of chosen souls whose lives are often hidden from the world, but in whom God will always provide for his honour faithful servants on earth, who will praise him in spirit and truth. But so deplorable are the overflowing of sensuality, avarice, and ambition, and such the lukewarmness and spiritual insensibility which have taken root in the hearts of many Christians, that the torrent of evil example and a worldly spirit ought to fill everyone with alarms, and oblige everyone to hold fast and be infinitely upon his guard that he be not carried away by it. It is not the crowd that we are to follow, but the gospel; and though temporal goods and prosperity are a blessing, they ought extremely to rouse our attention, excite our watchfulness, and inspire us with fear, being fraught with snares and, by the abuse which is frequently made of them, the ruin of virtue.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 10:*

THE TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY HOUSE OF LORETO: ST ERCONWALD is honoured in England on this date: ST MELCHIADES, Pope, styled a martyr in some calendars (304). He it was who opened a Council in the Lateran Palace in 313. St Augustine calls him a true son of peace and a true father of Christians.

DECEMBER 11

ST DAMASUS, POPE, CONFESSOR  
(A.D. 384)

[From his works, St Jerom, Rufin, and Anastasius in the Pontifical. See Tillemont, t. viii. p. 386. Ceillier, t. vi. p. 455. Abbate Anton. Merenda, in the new edition of this pope's works, which he published at Rome, in folio, anno. 1754, in which he gives the life of this pope in annals.]

POPE DAMASUS is said in the Pontifical to have been a Spaniard; which may be true of his extraction, but Tillemont and Merenda show that he seems to have been born at Rome. His father, whose name was Antony, either after the death of his wife or by her free consent, engaged himself in an ecclesiastical state, and was successively reader, deacon, and priest, of the title or parish Church of, St Laurence, in Rome. Damasus served in the sacred ministry in the same church and always lived in a perfect state of continence, as St Jerom assures us. When Liberius was banished by Constantius to Beroea, in 354, he was archdeacon of the Roman church, and attended him into exile, but immediately returned to Rome. Liberius at length was prevailed upon to sign a confession of faith in which the word consubstantial was omitted. After his return from banishment he constantly held communion with St Athanasius, as is clear from that holy man's letter to the bishops of Egypt in 360. He condemned and annulled the decrees of the council of Rimini, by a letter which he wrote to those bishops, mentioned by Siricius.<sup>1</sup> Liberius, after this, lay hid some time in the vaults of the cemeteries for fear of the persecutors, as we learn from Sozomen,<sup>2</sup> Prosper, in his chronicle,<sup>3</sup> Lucifer of Cagliari,<sup>4</sup> and Anastasius, in the life of Pope Julius. Thus he repaired the fault which he had committed by his subscription. All this time Damasus had a great share in the government of the church, and doubtless animated the zeal of the pope.

Liberius died on the 24th of September 366, and Damasus, who was then sixty years old, was chosen Bishop of Rome and ordained in the basilica of Lucina, otherwise called St Laurence's, which title he bore before his pontificate. Soon after Ursinus, called by some moderns Ursicinus, who could not bear that St Damasus should be preferred before him, got together a crowd of disorderly and seditious people in the Church of Sicin, commonly called the Liberian basilica, now St Mary Major, and persuaded Paul, Bishop of Tibur, now Tivoil, a dull, ignorant man, to ordain him Bishop of Rome, contrary to the ancient canons, which require three bishops for the ordination of a bishop, and to the ancient custom of the Roman church, whose bishop was to be consecrated by the Bishop of Ostia, as Baronius and Tillemont observe. Juventius, prefect of Rome, banished Ursinus and some others of his party. Seven priests, who adhered

<sup>1</sup> Siricius, Ep. ad Himer. Terrac.<sup>2</sup> Soz. lib. iv. c. 11 et 19.<sup>3</sup> See this chronicle, published entire by Canistus, ed. Basmae. t. i.<sup>4</sup> Lucifer adv. Constantium.

to him, were seized to be carried into exile, but were rescued by their partizans and carried to the Liberian basilica. The people that sided with Damasus came together with swords and clubs, besieged the basilica to deliver these men up to the prefect, and a fight ensued in which one hundred and thirty-seven persons were killed, as Ammianus Marcellinus<sup>1</sup> and St Austin relate.<sup>2</sup> In September the following year, 367, the Emperor Valentinian allowed Ursinus to return to Rome; but, on account of new tumults, in November banished him again with seven accomplices into Gaul. The schismatics still kept possession of a church, probably that of St Agnes without the walls, and held assemblies in the cemeteries; but Valentinian sent an order for that church to be put into the hands of Damasus; and Maximin, a magistrate of the city, a man naturally inclined to cruelty, put several schismatics to the torture. Rufin clears Damasus of any way concurring to, or approving of such barbarous proceedings, and the schismatics fell into the snare they had laid for him,<sup>3</sup> by which it seems they demanded an inquiry to be made by the rack, which turned to their own confusion and chastisement. It appears by certain verses of Pope Damasus that he had made a vow to God, in honour of certain martyrs, to engage their intercession for the conversion of some of the clergy who continued obstinate in the schism; and that these clergymen, being converted to the unity of the church, in gratitude adorned at their own expense the tombs of these martyrs. By the same poem we learn that the warmest abettors of the cause of Ursinus, after some time sincerely submitted to Damasus. His election was both anterior in time, and in all its circumstances regular; and was declared such by a great council held at Aquileia in 381, composed of the most holy and eminent bishops of the western church, and by a council at Rome in 378, in both which the acts of violence are imputed to the fury of Ursinus. St Ambrose,<sup>4</sup> St Jerom,<sup>5</sup> St Austin, Rufin, and others, bear testimony to the demeanour and to the due election of Damasus.

Ammianus Marcellinus, the famous pagan historian of those times, says that the chariots, rich clothes, and splendid feasting of the bishops of Rome, whose tables surpassed those of kings, were a tempting object to ambition; and wishes they would imitate the plainness of some prelates in the provinces. Herein, at least with regard to the table, there is doubtless a great deal of exaggeration and spleen; though sometimes extraordinary entertainments were probably given by the church. However, some appearance of pomp and state was certainly then made, since, as St Jerom reports,<sup>6</sup> Prætextatus, an eminent pagan senator, who was afterwards prefect of Rome, said to Pope Damasus, " Make me Bishop of Rome, and I will be a Christian to-morrow." Damasus certainly deserved not to fall under his

<sup>1</sup> Ammian. lib. xxvii. c. 3.

<sup>2</sup> St Aug. Brevic. Collat. c. 16. St Hier. in Chron. an. 367.

<sup>3</sup> Ruf. lib. ii. Hist. c. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Ambr. Ep. 11.

<sup>5</sup> St Hier. Ep. 61, ad Pammach. c. 3.

<sup>5</sup> In Chron. &c.

censure. For St Jerom, the great admirer of this holy pope, severely inveighs against the luxury and state which some ecclesiastics at Rome affected,<sup>1</sup> which he would never have done if it had been a satire on his patron; at least he was too sincere to have continued his admirer. Moreover, in 370, Valentinian, to repress the scandalous conduct of ecclesiastics who persuaded persons to bequeath estates or legacies to the church in prejudice of their heirs, addressed a law to Damasus forbidding the clergy or monks to frequent the houses of orphans and widows, or to receive from them any gift, legacy, or feoffment in trust. This edict Pope Damasus caused to be read in all the churches of Rome, and he was very severe in putting the same into execution, so as to give great offence to some unworthy persons who, on that account, went over to the schismatics; but some time after returned to their duty. Baronius thinks this law was enacted at the request of the pope, because it was addressed to him. At least it was certainly approved by him, and was not less agreeable to him than just in itself. It appears by St Damasus's fifteenth poem, that having escaped all dangers and persecutions,<sup>2</sup> in thanksgiving he made a pilgrimage to St Felix's shrine at Nola, and there hung up this votive poem and performed his devotions.

Arianism reigned in the East under the protection of Valens, though vigorously opposed by many pillars of orthodoxy, as St Athanasius, St Basil, &c. In the West, it was confined to Milan and Pannonia. Utterly to extirpate it in that part of the world, Pope Damasus, in a council at Rome in 368, condemned Ursacius and Valens, famous Arian bishops in Pannonia, and in another in 370, Auxentius of Milan. The schism of Antioch fixed the attention of the whole church. Meletius had been ordained upon the expulsion of St Eustathius, whom the Arians had banished; Paulinus was acknowledged by the zealous Catholics, called Eustathians, because during the life of St Eustathius they would admit no other bishop. St Basil and other Orientals, being well informed of the orthodox faith of St Meletius, adhered to him; but Damasus, with the western prelates, held communion with Paulinus, suspecting the orthodoxy of Meletius on account of the doubtful principles of some of those by whom he was advanced to the see. Notwithstanding this disagreement these prelates were careful to preserve the peace of Christ with one another. The heresy of Apollinaris or Apollinaris caused a greater breach. Apollinaris, the father, taught grammar first at Berytus, afterwards at Laodicea, in Syria, where he married and had a son of the same name, who was brought up to learning, had a good genius well improved by studies, and taught rhetoric in the same town; and both embracing an ecclesiastical state, the father was priest and the son reader in that church at the same time. The younger of these was chosen Bishop of Laodicea in 362. When Julian the Apostate forbade

<sup>1</sup> St. Hier. Ep. 61, ad Pammach. c. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Carm. 15, p. 230. See Muratori, Not. in Carm. Paulini xi. v. 11, et diss. 18, Ferraria, De Nol. Coemet. c. 10; Merenda, an. 368, p. 15.

Christians to read the classics, the two Apollinariuses composed very beautiful hymns in all sorts of verse on the sacred history and other pious subjects, which are lost except a paraphrase on the psalms in hexameter verse. In these poems they began to scatter the poison of certain errors, which were condemned by St Athanasius in his council at Alexandria in 360; but the author was not then known. St Athanasius wrote against these errors, without naming the author, in 362. In the council which Damasus held at Rome in 374, the same conduct was observed. But the obstinacy of the Bishop of Apollinarius appearing incurable, from that time his name was no longer spared; it was anathematized first by Pope Damasus at Rome. The heresiarch lived to a great age and died in his impiety.

When Nectarius was chosen Archbishop of Constantinople, Theodosius sent deputies to Rome, to entreat Pope Damasus to confirm his election.<sup>1</sup> When St Jerom accompanied St Epiphanius and St Paulinus of Antioch to Rome, Damasus detained him till his death, three years after, near his person, employing him in quality of secretary to write his letters and answer consultations. This pope, who was himself a very learned man and well skilled in the Holy Scriptures, encouraged St Jerom in his studies. That severe and holy doctor calls him "an excellent man";<sup>2</sup> and in another place,<sup>3</sup> "an incomparable person, learned in the Scriptures, a virgin doctor of the virgin church, who loved chastity and heard its eulogiums with pleasure." Theodoret calls him the celebrated Damasus,<sup>4</sup> and places him at the head of the famous doctors of divine grace in the Latin church.<sup>5</sup> The Oriental bishops in 431, profess that they follow the holy example of Damasus, Basil, Athanasius, Ambrose, and others, who have been eminent for their learning. The general council of Chalcedon styles Damasus, for his piety, the honour and glory of Rome.<sup>6</sup> Theodoret says; "He was illustrious by his holy life, and ready to preach and to do all things in defence of the apostolic doctrine."<sup>7</sup>

This pope rebuilt, or at least repaired the Church of St Laurence near Pompey's theatre, where he had officiated after his father, and which to this day is called from St Laurence, *in Damaso*. He beautified it with paintings of sacred history, which were remaining four hundred years afterwards.<sup>8</sup> He presented it with a paten of silver weighing fifteen pounds, a wrought vessel of ten pounds weight, five silver chalices weighing three pounds each, five silver sconces, to hold wax lights, of eight pounds each, and candlesticks of brass of sixteen pounds weight. He also settled upon it several houses that were near the church, and a piece of land.<sup>9</sup> St Damasus likewise drained all the springs of the Vatican which ran over the bodies that were buried there, and he decorated the sepulchres

<sup>1</sup> Bon. Ep. ad Episc. Macedon. Conc. t. iv. p. 1708.

<sup>2</sup> Id. Ep. 30, p. 240.

<sup>3</sup> Conc. t. v. p. 825.

<sup>4</sup> Anast. in. Pontif.

<sup>5</sup> Theodoret. Ep. 144.

<sup>6</sup> Theod. Hist. lib. v. c. 2.

<sup>7</sup> St Hier. Ep. ad Eust.

<sup>8</sup> Id. Ep. 145.

<sup>9</sup> Adrian. i, Ep. Conc. t. vii.

of a great number of martyrs in the cemeteries, and adorned them with epitaphs in verse, of which a collection of almost forty is extant. Some of these belong not to him; those which are his work, are distinguished by a peculiar elegance and elevation, and justify the commendation which St Jerom gives to his poetical genius. In the few letters of this pope which we have in the editions of the councils, out of the great number which he wrote, it appears that he was a man of genius and taste, and wrote with elegance. The ancients particularly commend his constancy in maintaining the purity of our holy faith, the innocence of his manners, his Christian humility, his compassion for the poor, his piety in adorning holy places, especially the tombs of the martyrs, and his singular learning. Having sat eighteen years and two months, he died on the 10th of December 384, being near fourscore years of age. A pontifical kept in the Vatican library, quoted by Merenda, says that the saint burning with an ardent desire to be dissolved and be with Christ, he was seized with a fever, and having received the body and blood of the Lord, lifting up his eyes and hands to heaven, he expired in devout prayer. His intercession is particularly implored in Italy by persons that are sick of fevers.<sup>1</sup> He was buried near his mother and sister, in an oratory which he had built and adorned at the catacombs near the Ardeatin Way, between that road and the cemetery of Calixtus or Prætextatus. Marangonus describes his sepulchre and those of his mother and sister, as they were discovered in the year 1736.

Learning, the great accomplishment and improvement of the human mind, is often made its bane. This sometimes happens by the choice which a man makes of his studies, and much oftener by the manner in which he pursues them. As to the choice, there is no sloth more trifling or vain than the studies of some learned men; to whom we may apply what Plato said to the charioteer, whose dexterity in the circus struck the spectators with astonishment. But the philosopher declared he deserved to be publicly chastised for the loss of so much time as was necessary for him to have attained that dexterity in so trifling and useless an exercise. A perfect knowledge of our own, and some foreign and learned languages, is a necessary instrument, and a key to much useful knowledge, but of little use if it be not directed to higher purposes. Holy David, St Ambrose, St Damasus, Prudentius, St Paulinus, and many others consecrated poetry to the divine praises; but if made an employment of life, especially when the proper studies or occupations of a state ought to have banished them, they become a pernicious idleness, and so much entertain the heart as to ruin devotion and the taste of duties, and to occupy our reason in trifles. They are particularly condemned by the fathers and councils, in clergymen,

<sup>1</sup> Fonseca, lib. i. c. 16; Merenda, ad an. 384, p. 133.

as trespassing upon their obligations and destructive of the spirit of their profession. Logic gives a justness and clearness to our thoughts, teaches accurate reasoning, and exceedingly improves the judgment and other faculties of the mind. Yet, if its rules are made too prolix or spun into refined subtleties, they puzzle and confound the understanding. The same is to be said of metaphysics, which ought properly to be called the generals of science; a just acquaintance with which is, above all other studies and accomplishments, the means of improving the mind to the highest perfection, especially its ruling faculty, the judgment, and fitting it for success and accuracy in all other sciences and arts. The principles of Aristotle in logic and metaphysics are solid, exact, complete, and far preferable to all others; but the exposition must be concise, methodical, profound, infinitely accurate, clear, elegant, or free from a Gothic dress, which disfigures the best attainments, and is the characteristic of barbarism. If fondness for any science degenerates into passion, it becomes a dangerous and vicious branch of curiosity, drains the heart, hinders holy meditation and prayer, captivates the soul, and produces all the disorders of inordinate passions.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 11:*

THE VENERABLE ARTHUR FRANCIS BELL, O.S.F., 1590-1643, martyr, one-time priest at West Grinstead, Sussex: ST DAMASUS I, Pope, said to have been a Spaniard; notable for his devotion to the Roman martyrs and the inscriptions he composed in their praise: ST DANIEL THE STYLITE, who lived a holy life in the fifth century: ST FUSCIAN, ST VICTORINUS and other martyrs: and ST GEMTIAN, martyr.

## DECEMBER 12

### ST EPIMACHUS, ST ALEXANDER, AND OTHER MARTYRS

(A.D. 250)

[From St Dionysius of Alexandria, in Eusebius, *Hist. lib. vi. c. 14.*]

WHILST the persecution set on foot by Decius raged with the utmost violence at Alexandria in 250, and the magistrates were very industrious and active in searching for Christians, Alexander and Epimachus fell into their hands, and upon confessing the name of Jesus Christ, were loaded with chains, committed to prison, and suffered all the hardships of a long and rigorous confinement. Remaining the same after this severe trial of their faith and patience, they were beaten with clubs, their sides were torn with iron hooks, and they consummated their martyrdom by fire. St Dionysius, archbishop of that city and an eye-witness of some part of their sufferings, gives us this short account of their sufferings, and also makes mention of four martyrs of the other sex, who were crowned on the same day and at the same place. Ammonium, the first of them, a virgin of irreproachable life, endured unheard-of torments without open-

ing her mouth, only to declare that no arts or power should ever prevail with her to let drop the least word to the prejudice of her holy profession. She kept her promise inviolably, and was at length led to execution, being, as it seems, beheaded. The second of these holy women was named Mercuria, a person venerable for her age and virtue; the third was Dionysia, who, though a tender mother of many children, cheerfully commended them to God, and preferred his holy love to all human considerations; the fourth was another Ammonium. The judge, blushing to see himself shamefully baffled and vanquished by the first of these female champions, and observing the like fortitude and resolution in the countenances of the rest, commanded the other three to be beheaded without more ado. They are all commemorated in the Roman Martyrology on this day.

To place the virtue of the Christian martyrs in its true light we have but to consider it as contrasting the pretended heroism of the greatest sages of paganism. The martyr's constancy is founded in humility, and its motives is the pure love of God and perfect fidelity to his holy law. He regards himself as a weak reed, and therefore God strengthens him and by his grace makes him an unshaken pillar.

The martyr considers himself as a base sinner, who deserves to suffer the death he is going to endure; he looks upon his martyrdom as the beginning of his penance, not as the consummation of his virtue; and he is persuaded that whatever he can suffer falls short of what he deserves; that it is the highest honour, of which he is infinitely unworthy, to be called to make a sacrifice to God of his life and all that he has received of his bounty, to give so pregnant a testimony of his fidelity and love, to be rendered conformable to Christ, and to die for his sake who, out of infinite mercy and love, laid down his most precious life, and suffered the most cruel torments, and the most outrageous insults and affronts for us: he calls it the greatest happiness to redeem eternal torments by momentary sufferings. Again the martyr suffers with modesty and tender fortitude; he desires not acclamations, seeks no applause, thinks only that God is the spectator of his conflict, and flies the eyes of men, at least, unless with a pure view that God may be known and glorified through the testimony which he bears to his law and sovereign goodness and greatness. Lastly, he praises and thanks God amidst his torments; he feels no sentiments of revenge, but tenderly loves, and earnestly prays for the prosperity of those by whose hands or unjust calumnies he suffers the most exquisite and intolerable pain, and is only afflicted at the danger of their eternal perdition. On the other side, the vain and proud philosopher is puffed up in his own mind because he suffers; he sets forth his pretended virtue and constancy with a foolish grovelling ostentation; he conceals his inward spite, rage, and despair, under the hypocritical exterior of a

forced and affected patience; he insults his enemies or, at least, studies and wishes revenge.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 12 :*

ST COLMAN, Abbot in Ireland in the seventh age: ST COLUMBA or COLUMB, Abbot: ST CORENTIN, Bishop of Quimper in the fifth century: another ST COLENTIN of Devonshire. Both these saints (Corentin) were of British birth: ST CORMAC, Abbot of Glendaloch, 659: ST EADBURGHE, Abbess of Thanet, 751: ST EPIMACHUS, ST ALEXANDER and other martyrs in the persecution under Decius in Alexandria in the year 250. These others included ST AMMONARIUM, a virgin of irreproachable life who endured unheard-of torments without opening her mouth: ST MERCUTIA, a woman venerable for her age and virtue: ST DIONYSIA, a tender mother of many children, whom she committed to God: and another ST AMMONARIUM: In the dioceses of Ireland ST FINIAN is honoured on this date. An Irishman, he found St David in Wales and was there for thirty years; returning to Ireland, he became Bishop of Clonard and died in 552.

### DECEMBER 13

#### ST LUCY, VIRGIN, MARTYR

(A.D. 304)

[Abridged from her Acts, older than St Aldehelm, who quoted them in the seventh century.]

THE glorious virgin and martyr St Lucy, one of the brightest ornaments of the church of Sicily, was born of honourable and wealthy parents in the city of Syracusa, and educated from her cradle in the faith of Christ. She lost her father in her infancy, but Eutychia, her mother, took singular care to furnish her with tender and sublime sentiments of piety and religion. By the early impressions which Lucy received and the strong influence of divine grace, Lucy discovered no disposition but toward virtue, and she was yet very young when she offered to God the flower of her virginity. This vow, however, she kept a secret, and her mother, who was a stranger to it, pressed her to marry a young gentleman who was a pagan. The saint sought occasions to hinder this design from taking effect, and her mother was visited with a long and troublesome flux of blood, under which she laboured four years without finding any remedy by recourse to physicians. At length she was persuaded by her daughter to go to Catana and offer up her prayers to God for relief at the tomb of St Agatha. St Lucy accompanied her thither, and their prayers were successful. Hereupon our saint disclosed to her mother her desire of devoting herself to God in a state of perpetual virginity, and of bestowing her fortune on the poor: and Eutychia, in gratitude, left her at full liberty to pursue her pious inclinations. The young nobleman, with whom the mother had treated about marrying her, came to understand this by the sale of her jewels and goods, and the distribution of the price among the poor, and in his rage accused her before the governor Paschiasius as a Christian, the persecution of Diocletian then raging with the utmost fury. The judge commanded the holy virgin to be exposed to prostitution in a brothel-house; but God rendered her immovable, so that the guards were not able

to carry her thither. He also made her an over-match for the cruelty of the persecutors, in overcoming fire and other torments. After a long and glorious combat she died in prison of the wounds she had received, about the year 304. She was honoured at Rome in the sixth century among the most illustrious virgins and martyrs, whose triumphs the church celebrates, as appears from the Sacramentary of St Gregory, Bede, and others. Her festival was kept in England till the change of religion, as a holy day of the second rank, in which no work but tillage or the like was allowed. Her body remained at Syracusa for many years; but was at length translated into Italy, and thence by the authority of the Emperor Otho I to Metz, as Sigebert of Gemblours relates. It is there exposed to public veneration in a rich chapel of St Vincent's Church. A portion of her relics was carried to Constantinople and brought thence to Venice, where it is kept with singular veneration. St Lucy is often painted with the balls of her eyes laid in a dish: perhaps her eyes were defaced or plucked out, though her present acts make no mention of any such circumstance. In many places her intercession is particularly implored for distempers of the eyes.

It is a matter of the greatest consequence what ideas are stamped upon the ductile minds of children, what sentiments are impressed on their hearts, and to what habits they are first formed. Let them be inured to little denials both in their will and senses, and learn that pleasures which gratify the senses must be guarded against, and used with great fear and moderation: for by them the taste is debauched, and the constitution of the soul broken and spoiled much more fatally than that of the body can be by means contrary to its health.

There are few Lucys nowadays among Christian ladies, because sensuality, pride, and vanity are instilled into their minds by the false maxims and pernicious example of those with whom they first converse. Alas! unless a constant watchfulness and restraint both produce and strengthen good habits, the inclinations of our souls lean of their own accord toward corruption.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 13*

ST ADALBERT, Bishop of Cambray: ST ANTHONY GRASSI: ST AUBERT, Bishop of Cambray and Arras in the seventh century: BLESSED JOHN MARINONI of Venice, in the sixteenth century: ST JODOC (seventh century): ST LUCY, martyred at Syracuse in 304. She was one of the brightest ornaments of the Church in Sicily; her festival was kept in England up to the time of the "Reformation" as a holy day of the second rank. She is often painted with the balls of her eyes in a dish; though there is no record of this, she is thought to have had her eyes plucked out and is invoked for blindness. Honoured in the dioceses of England on December 14: ST OTHILIA, Abbess, in the eighth century.

DECEMBER 14

ST SPIRIDION, BISHOP, CONFESSOR  
(A.D. 348)

[From Rufin. lib. i. c. 5; Socrates, lib. i. c. 12, p. 39; Sozomen, lib. i. c. 11, p. 22; St Athan. Apol. 2. See also his Acts in Metaphrastes, Lipomanus, and Surius, and other Greek Acts of his life, written by Theodorus, Bishop of Paphos, quoted by Jos. Assemani in Calend. Univ. ad Dec. 12, p. 453.]

SPIRIDION, or SPIRIDON, was a native of Cyprus, was married, and had a daughter named Irene, who lived always a virgin. His employment was that of keeping sheep which, in patriarchal times, even kings thought not beneath their dignity. In this retired state, simplicity and innocence of heart engaged the Almighty to furnish him with extraordinary lights in the paths of virtue, which it was the more easy for him safely to pursue, as he shunned the company of those whose example and false maxims might have induced him to take the same liberties as they did, and fall into a worldly course of life. Spiridion made such use of the advantages which his state afforded him for virtue, as to seem to rival the Macariuses in their deserts: and he was honoured with the gift of miracles.

Sozomen, who wrote in the beginning of the fifth century, tells us that a gang of thieves attempting one night to carry off some of his sheep, were stopped by an invisible hand, so that they could neither perpetrate the intended theft nor make their escape. Spiridion finding them the next morning thus secured, set them at liberty by his prayers and gave them a ram, but exhorted them seriously to consider the danger of their state and amend their lives; observing to them that they had taken a great deal of unnecessary pains, and ran great hazard for what they might have made their own by asking for it. The same historian says,<sup>1</sup> that it was the saint's custom to fast in Lent with his whole family for some days together without eating anything, at which time, when he had no bread in his house, a traveller called upon him to rest and refresh himself on the road, according to the rule of hospitality which he practised. Spiridion having nothing else in the house, ordered some salt pork to be boiled, for he saw the traveller was extremely fatigued. Then, having prayed some time, he asked the divine pardon, that is, prayed that the dispensation which he judged necessary, might be agreeable to God. After this he invited the stranger to eat, who excused himself, saying that he was a Christian. Spiridion told him that no meats being by their own nature unclean, the rule of fasting admitted a dispensation. St Spiridion was chosen Bishop of Tremithus, a city on the sea-coast, near Salamis, and continued the same rural exercise which he had before followed, yet so as to attend his pastoral functions with great assiduity and devotion. His

<sup>1</sup> Sozom. lib. i. c. 11, p. 24, ed. Cantabr. an. 1720.

diocese was very small, and the inhabitants were poor, but the Christians very regular in their manners, though there remained among them several idolaters. St Spiridion divided his revenue into two parts; the one of which he gave to the poor, the other he reserved for his church and household and for a loan to lend to such as were in necessity, never being solicitous for the morrow. In the persecution of Maximian Galerius, he made a glorious confession of the faith. The Roman Martyrology tells us he was one of those who lost their right eye, had the sinews of their left hand cut and were sent to work in the mines. He was one of the three hundred and eighteen prelates who composed the first general council of Nice, and was there distinguished among the holy confessors who had suffered much for the faith of Christ. About that time died his daughter Irene. A certain person had deposited in her hands a thing of great value, that it might be the more secure. This he demanded of the bishop after her death, but it was not to be found, nobody knowing where it was hid. The person whose loss it was, appeared extremely afflicted. Socrates and Sozomen say, that the good bishop, moved with compassion, went to the place where his daughter was buried, called her by her name, and asked her where she had laid what such a person had left in her hands. They add that she answered him, giving directions where she had hid it in the ground, that it might be more safe, and that it was found there. Though our holy prelate had very little acquaintance with human sciences, he had made the Scriptures his daily meditation, and had learned what veneration is due to the Word of God. The bishops of Cyprus being on a certain occasion assembled together, Triphilius, Bishop of Ledri, in that island (whom St Jerom commends as the most eloquent man of his time), was engaged to preach a sermon; and mentioning that passage, "Take up thy bed, and walk," he made use of a word to express the sick man's bed, which he thought more elegant and beautiful than that in the original text. Spiridion, full of a holy resentment at this false nicety, and attempt to add graces to what was more adorned with simplicity, arose and asked whether the preacher knew better the right term than the evangelist? Our saint defended the cause of St Athanasius in the council of Sardica, in 347, and shortly after passed to eternal bliss. The Greeks honour his memory on the 12th, the Latins on the 14th of this month.

Sacred learning is necessary in a minister of the church, but sanctity is not less necessary. Nothing is so eloquent or so powerfully persuasive as example. A learned man may convince, but to convert souls is chiefly the privilege of those that are pious. There have been few ages in which polite literature has been cultivated with greater ardour than the present wherein we live. How many great orators, how many elegant writers have made their appearance in it! If these were all saints, what a reformation

of manners should we see among the people! It is sanctity that possesses the art of softening the heart and subduing all the powers of the soul. An edifying life proves the preacher sincere, and is alone a sermon which obstinacy itself will find it hard to hold out against; it stops the mouth of the enemies of truth and virtue. The life, vigour, and justness of a discourse are the fruit of wit, genius, and study, but unction in words is produced only by the heart. A man must be animated with the Spirit of God to speak powerfully on divine things; the conversion of hearts is the work of God.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 14:*

ST FINGAR AND HIS COMPANIONS, martyred in Cornwall, in 455, are commemorated in Ireland on this date: ST NARCISSUS, Archbishop of Rheims and his COMPANION MARTYRS: and ST SPIRIDION, a native of Cyprus, who kept sheep and made such use of his occupation as it afforded him opportunity for progressing in virtue, that later he was ordained.

### DECEMBER 15

## ST EUSEBIUS, BISHOP OF VERCELLI (A.D. 371)

[From the fathers and ecclesiastical historians of the fourth century. See Tillemont, Ughelli, t. iv. p. 1044; Ceillier, t. v. p. 440; Orsi, lib. xiv.; Fleury, lib. xviii. n. 14, 16, and 41, lib. xv. n. 30.]

ST EUSEBIUS was born of a noble family, in the isle of Sardinia, where his father is said to have died in chains for the faith. His mother, whose name was Restituta, being left a widow, carried him and a daughter she had, both in their infancy, to Rome.<sup>1</sup> Eusebius was brought up in the practice of piety and in the study of sacred learning, and ordained lictor by St Sylvester. We know not by what accident he was called to Vercelli, a city now in Piedmont. He served that church among the clergy with such applause that the episcopal chair becoming vacant, he was unanimously chosen by the clergy and people to fill it. He is the first bishop of Vercelli whose name we know. St Ambrose assures us that he was the first who in the West united the monastic life with the clerical, living himself, and making his clergy in the city live, almost in the same manner as the monks in the East did in the deserts. They shut themselves up in one house with their pastor, and exercised themselves night and day in a heavenly warfare, continually occupied in the praises of God, having no other ambition than to appease his anger by fervent and uninterrupted prayers. Their minds were always employed in reading or at work. The holy bishop saw that the best and first means to labour effectually for the edification and sanctification of his people, was to form a clergy under his eyes, on whose innocence, piety, and zeal in the functions of their ministry he could depend. In this design he succeeded so well, that other churches earnestly demanded his

<sup>1</sup> St Ambr. Ep. 63, p. 1038; St Hier. in Catal. c. 96.

disciples for their bishops, and a great number of holy prelates came out of his school who were burning and shining lamps in the church of God. He was at the same time very careful to instruct his flock and inspire them with the maxims of the gospel. Many, moved by his exhortations, embraced virginity to serve God in purity of heart without being divided by the cares or pleasures of the world. In a short time the whole city of Vercelli appeared inflamed with the fire of divine love which Jesus Christ came to bring on earth, and which he ardently desired to see kindled in all hearts. Convicted by the force of the truth which the zealous pastor preached, persuaded by the sweetness and charity of his conduct, and still more powerfully excited by his examples, sinners encouraged themselves to a change of their lives, and all were animated to advance more and more in virtue. But his sanctity would have been imperfect without the trial of persecutions.

The Arians governed all things by violence, under the authority of the Arian Emperor Constantius. In 354, Pope Liberius deputed St Eusebius, with Lucifer of Cagliari, to beg leave of that emperor, who passed the winter at Arles, in Gaul, to assemble a free council.<sup>1</sup> Constantius agreed to a council, which met at Milan in 355 whilst the emperor resided in that city. Eusebius, seeing all things would be there carried on by violence through the power of the Arians, though the Catholic prelates were more numerous, refused to go to it till he was pressed by Liberius himself and by his legates, Lucifer of Cagliari, Pancratius, and Hilary,<sup>2</sup> in order to resist the Arians, as St Peter had done Simon the magician. When he was come to Milan, the Arians excluded him the council for the ten first days. When he was admitted, he laid the Nicene Creed on the table, and insisted on all signing that rule of faith before the cause of St Athanasius should be brought to a hearing; for the chief drift of the heretics was to procure, if possible, the condemnation of that most formidable champion of the faith. Many were gained by the artifices of the Arians or intimidated by the threats of the emperor, and signed the sentence which was pronounced against him. The emperor sent for St Eusebius, St Dionysius, and Lucifer of Cagliari, and pressed them to condemn Athanasius. They insisted upon his innocence, and that he could not be condemned without being heard. "I am his accuser," said Constantius; "believe upon my word the charge brought against him." The bishops answered, "This is not a secular affair that requires your opinion as emperor." Constantius took them up in anger, saying, "My will ought to pass for a rule. The bishops of Syria are satisfied that it should be so. Obey, or you shall be banished." The bishops represented to him that he must one day give an account to God of his administration. The prince, in the transport of his rage, thought once of putting them to death, but was content to banish them. The

<sup>1</sup> Liber. Ep. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Sulpit. Sever. St Athan. St Hilary.

officers entered the sanctuary, tore the holy prelates from the altar, and conducted them to different places. Dionysius was sent into Cappadocia, where he died. He is commemorated in the Roman Martyrology on the 25th of May. Lucifer was banished to Germanicia, in Syria, of which city Eudoxus, a celebrated Arian, was bishop: and our saint to Scythopolis, in Palestine, there to be treated at the discretion of the Arian bishop, Patrophilus. Their chains did not hinder them from serving the church, and they confounded the heretics wherever they went. Pope Liberius wrote to them a letter of congratulation, exhorting them to courage and constancy.

St Eusebius was lodged at first with the good Count Joseph, and was comforted by the visits of St Epiphanius and other holy men, and by the arrival of the deputies of his church of Vercelli with presents for his subsistence. A great share of the presents he gave to his fellow-confessors and to the poor. But his patience was to be exercised by greater trials. Count Joseph died, and the Arians with the emperor's officers insulted the saint, dragged him on the ground through the streets, sometimes carried him backwards half naked, and at last shut him up in a little chamber, plying him for four days with all manner of violences to engage him to conform. They forbade his deacons and other fellow-confessors to be admitted to see him. The saint had abandoned his body to suffer all manner of evil treatments from their hands, without opening his mouth all that while; but seeing himself debarred of his only comfort and support, he sent a letter to the Arian bishop Patrophilus, with the following direction: "Eusebius, the servant of God, with the other servants of God who suffer with me for the faith, to Patrophilus, the jailer, and to his officers." After a short relation of what he had suffered, he desired that his deacons might be allowed to come to him. After he remained in that confinement four days without eating, the Arians sent him back to his lodgings. Twenty-five days afterwards they came again, armed with clubs, broke down a wall in the house, and dragged him again into a little dungeon, with a priest named Tegrinus. They rifled his lodgings, plundered all his provisions, and cast many priests, monks, and even nuns into public prisons. His sufferings here were aggravated every day, till the place of his exile was changed. From Scythopolis he was sent into Cappadocia and, some time afterwards, into Upper Thebais, in Egypt. We have a letter which he wrote from this third place of his banishment to Gregory, Bishop of Elvire, to encourage him vigorously to oppose Osius (who had unhappily fallen) and all who had forsaken the faith of the church, without fearing the power of kings. He expresses a desire to end his life in sufferings, that he might be glorified in the kingdom of God. This short letter discovers the zeal of a holy pastor, joined with the courage of a martyr. Constantius being dead, toward the end of the year 361, Julian gave leave to all the banished

prelates to return to their sees. St Eusebius left Thebais and came to Alexandria, to concert measures with St Athanasius for applying proper remedies to the evils of the church. He was present, and subscribed immediately after St Athanasius, in the council held there in 362, by which it was resolved to allow the penitent prelates, who had been deceived by the Arians, especially at Rimini, to preserve their dignity. From Alexandria our saint went to Antioch to endeavour to extinguish the great schism there; but found it widened by Lucifer of Cagliari, who had ordained Paulinus bishop. He would not communicate with Paulinus, but made haste out of Antioch. Lucifer resented this behaviour, and broke off communion with him and with all who with the late council of Alexandria received the Arian bishops in their dignity upon their return to the true faith. This was the origin of the schism of Lucifer who, by pride, lost the fruit of his former zeal and sufferings.

St Eusebius travelled over the East and through Illyricum, confirming in the faith those that were wavering, and bringing back many that were gone astray. Italy, at his return, changed its mourning garments, according to the expression of St Jerom. There St Hilary of Poitiers and St Eusebius met, and were employed in opposing the Arians, particularly Auxentius of Milan: but that crafty heretic had gained the favour of Valentinian, and maintained himself under his protection against the united zealous efforts of St Hilary and St Eusebius. St Jerom, in his chronicle, places the death of the latter in 371. An ancient author says it happened on the 1st of August. He is styled a martyr in two old panegyrics in his praise, printed in the appendix of the works of St Ambrose. There only remain of his works the three epistles above quoted. In the cathedral of Vercelli is shown an old MS. copy of the gospels of St Matthew and St Mark, said to be written by St Eusebius: it was almost worn out with age near eight hundred years ago, when King Berengarius caused it to be covered with plates of silver. The body of St Eusebius is laid in a shrine above a side altar in the cathedral at Vercelli. The Roman Missal and Breviary give his office on the 15th of December, which is probably the day on which his relics were removed; for his name occurs in ancient calendars on the 1st of August.

The holy fathers, who by their zeal and learning maintained the true faith, shunned the dangerous rocks of error because in their studies they followed the rules laid down by divine revelation, and made sincere humility the foundation of all their literary pursuits. Conscious that they were liable to mistakes, they entertained a modest diffidence in themselves and their own judgment, and said with St Austin, "I may err, but a heretic I will never be." This humility and caution is a sure guard against any fatal errors in religion, or dangerous miscarriages in civil conduct, with regard

to literary attempts, into which an overbearing pride chiefly betrays men. Many in studying pursue their speculations so far as to lose sight of common sense, and by too intense an application to things beyond their sphere, overset and unhinge their understanding. Many mistake the wildest fancies of their brain for reason. How many heresies have been set up by scholars among Christians! The root of these abuses is a secret vanity, self-sufficiency, or complacency in opinion of their own knowledge or penetration, which scholars easily entertain. So true it is, as the apostle tells us, that "science puffs up"; not of itself, but through the propensity of the human heart to pride. It is therefore necessary that every student learn, in the first place, never to trust in his own abilities, and make modesty and humility, by which men know themselves, the foundation of his learning.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 15:*

St EUSEBIUS, Bishop of Vercelli, born of a noble family in Sardinia, where his father is said to have died in chains: and St FLORENCE or FLAN, Abbot of Benchor.

#### DECEMBER 16

### ST ADO, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF VIENNE (A.D. 875)

[From his life collected by Mabillon, t. vi. Act. Ben. p. 281. See Ceillier, t. xix. p. 247.]

ADO was born in the diocese of Sens, toward Gatinois, about the year 800. It was the principal care of his religious parents to seek tutors, masters, and companions who should concur together by their maxims, example, interior spirit, and prudent and earnest instructions to form the morals of their son and inspire into his soul the most tender and perfect sentiments of Christian piety. All this they happily found in the monastery of Ferrieres in Gatinois, at that time famous for learning and discipline. The pregnancy of his wit, the solidity of his judgment, his assiduity at his studies and, above all, his humble obedience and docility, and his sincere piety, gained him the esteem and affections of the abbot Sigulph and all his masters; and engaged them to redouble their care and attention in lending him every assistance to adorn his mind with all useful science, and to form the most perfect Christian spirit in his heart. Their pains were abundantly recompensed by the great progress which he made. Many great and powerful friends sought, by soothing flatteries, and by setting before him the lure of worldly honours and pleasures, to engage him in the career which his birth and abilities opened to him. But the pious young nobleman saw clearly the dangers which attended such a course; and, dreading lest in such a state anything could slacken his ardour in the entire consecration of himself to the divine service, he took the religious

habit in that house, resolving never to serve any other master but God alone.

The saint was yet young when Marcvard, abbot of Prom, who had formerly been himself a monk of Ferrieres, begged of the abbot of Ferrieres, as the greatest of favours, that Ado might teach the sacred sciences in his monastery. The request could not be refused. Ado so taught as to endeavour to make his hearers truly sensible that if studies, even of morality and religion, entirely terminate in a barren knowledge of those truths, without acquiring the interior habits, sentiments, and dispositions which they inculcate, though they may sometimes be serviceable to others, they are not only useless but pernicious to those who are possessed of them. Our saint, therefore, laboured to make all that were under his care truly servants of God; and it pleased God to suffer him to fall under grievous trials, that by them he might complete the work of his own sanctification and the entire sacrifice of his heart. After the death of Marcvard he was, through envy and jealousy, expelled the house, treated with great contempt, and oppressed by outrageous slanders. Ado took this opportunity to visit the tombs of the apostles at Rome, and stayed five years in that city. From thence he removed to Ravenna, where he found an old Martyrology, of which he took a copy, which he improved by many additions and corrections, and published about the year 858.<sup>1</sup> He also compiled a chronicle, and wrote the lives of St Desiderius and St Chef. When he returned out of Italy he made a halt at Lyons, and St Remigius, archbishop of that see, detained him there and, having obtained leave of the abbot of Ferrieres, gave him in charge of the parish church of St Romanus, near Vienne. The celebrated Lupus, who had been chosen abbot of Ferrieres, and who is well known by his hundred and thirty letters and several little treatises, became his zealous advocate, and the see of Vienne falling vacant, he was chosen archbishop and consecrated in September 860. The year following he received the pall from Pope Nicholas, with the decrees of a Roman council, the purport of which was to check certain disorders which had crept into several churches in France.

Ado's promotion made no change in his behaviour; he was still the same humble, modest, mortified man as when in a cloister, and endeavoured to inspire his flock with the like sentiments and dispositions. He was indefatigable in pressing the great truths of salvation. He usually began his sermons and exhortations with these or the like words, "Hear the eternal truth, which speaks to you in the gospel"; or, "Hear Jesus Christ, who saith to you," &c. It was a principal part of his care that all candidates for holy orders should be rigorously examined, and he would be present at these examinations. He regulated the public service of the church with

<sup>1</sup> The best edition of Ado's Martyrology was that of Rosweidus, before Monsignor Georgi, secretary to Benedict XIV, favoured us with a new one far more correct, and enriched with notes and useful dissertations.

much zeal and wisdom, and made strict inquiry into the conduct of all those who were called to serve in the ministry of the altar, not only with regard to their progress in sacred learning, and the regularity of their manners, but also with regard to their spirit of devotion and assiduity in constant prayer. The saint laboured without intermission for the reformation of manners and establishing good discipline among the people. He took great care that all that were ignorant of the principles of Christianity should be forbid to be sponsors at baptism, or to be joined in matrimony, or admitted to any of the sacraments, till they were better instructed. What enforced his instructions, and gave them weight and efficacy, was his example. His life was most austere; he was in everything severe to himself, and all the clergymen that were about him were enjoined to apprise him of the least slip in his behaviour. Though he was inflexible towards obstinate sinners, and employed every means to bring them to repentance, when he found them sincerely desirous to return to God he received them with the greatest tenderness and indulgence, imitating the good Shepherd, who came down from heaven to seek the lost sheep and carried them back to the fold on his shoulders. By his care the poor were everywhere tenderly assisted with every corporeal and spiritual comfort and succour they could stand in need of, and many hospitals were raised for their reception and entertainment at his expense. It was his earnest desire to see all Christians seriously engaged in the noble contest, which of them should best fulfil his obligations in their full extent, which are all reduced to those which tie him to his Creator; for on a man's concern for them depends his regard for all others. To sum up the whole character of this good prelate in two words, Ado knew all the obligations of his post, and discharged them with the utmost exactness and fidelity. He distinguished himself in many councils abroad, and held himself several councils at Vienne to maintain the purity of faith and manners, though only a fragment of that which he celebrated in 870 is extant. When King Lothaire sought pretexts to divorce his Queen Thietburge, our holy prelate obliged him to desist from that unjust project, and he had a great share in many public transactions in which the interest of religion was concerned. For Pope Nicholas I, King Charles the Bald, and Lewis of Germany had the greatest regard for him on account of his prudence and sanctity, and paid a great deference to his advice. In the hurry of employments his mind was as recollected as if his whole business lay within the compass of his own private concerns. To read the lives of the saints, and to consider their edifying actions, in order to imbibe their spirit and quicken his own soul in the practice of piety, was an exercise in which he always found singular comfort and delight, and a great help to devotion; and, like the industrious bee which sucks honey from every flower, he endeavoured to learn from the life of every saint some new practice of virtue, and to treasure up in

his mind some new maxim of an interior life. From thus employing his thoughts on the saints, studying to copy their virtues, and affectionately and devoutly honouring them in God, he happily passed to their glorious society, eternally to enjoy God with them, on the 16th of December in 875, having been bishop fifteen years, three months. He is honoured in the church of Vienne, and named in the Roman Martyrology on this day.

This mortal life is a pilgrimage, full of labours, hardships, and perils, through an inhospitable desert, amidst numberless bypaths, and abounding with howling wild beasts. Amidst these, one only narrow path, which seems beset with briers and thorns and is trodden by a small number of courageous souls, leads to happiness; and amongst those who enter upon it, many in every part fall out of it into some or other of the devious tracts and windings which terminate in destruction. Amidst these alarming dangers we have a sure guide; the light of divine revelation safely points out to us the strait way, and Christ bids us follow him, walk by his spirit, carefully tread in his steps, and keep always close to his direction. If ever we forsake his divine guidance, we lose and bewilder ourselves. He is "the way, the truth, and the life." Many saints have followed this rule and escaped all dangers, who seem to cry out to us, "This is the right way: walk you in it." The example of a God made man for us is the greatest model which we are bound continually to study in his divine life and precepts. Those who in all stations in the world have copied his holy maxims and conduct sweetly invite us to this imitation of our divine original; every one of them cries out to us with St Paul, "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." Their example, if always placed before our eyes, will withhold us from being hurried away by the torrent of the world and its pernicious maxims; and the remembrance of their heroic conflicts, and the sight of the crowns they now enjoy, will be our comfort and support. What can give us greater joy in this valley of tears than to think often on the bliss which these glorious conquerors already possess, and on the means by which they attained to it? We ourselves press close after them, and even now are not far from the same glory, for we live on the borders of it.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 16:*

ST ADALBERT, Bishop of Madgeburg: ST ADO, Archbishop of Vienne, 875: ST ALICE: ST BEANUS, Bishop: and ST FLANNAN, Bishop of Killaloe in the seventh century, is honoured in the Dioceses of Ireland on this date.

DECEMBER 17

## ST OLYMPIAS, WIDOW

(ABOUT THE YEAR 410)

[From St Chrysostom's seventeen letters to her; Palladius in his life; another Palladius in Lausiac. c. 43; Sozom. lib. viii. c. 2; Leo Imp. in Encomio St Joan. Chrysostomi. See Tillemont, t. xi. p. 416.]

ST OLYMPIAS, the glory of the widows in the Eastern church, was a lady of illustrious descent and a plentiful fortune. She was born about the year 368, and left an orphan under the care of Procopius, who seems to have been her uncle; but it was her greatest happiness that she was brought up under the care of Theodosia, sister to St Amphilius, a most virtuous and prudent woman, whom St Gregory Nazianzen called a perfect pattern of piety, in whose life the tender virgin saw as in a glass the practice of all virtues, and it was her study faithfully to transcribe them into the copy of her own life. From this example which was placed before her eyes she raised herself more easily to contemplate and to endeavour to imitate Christ, who in all virtues is the divine original which every Christian is bound to act after. Olympias, besides her birth and fortune, was, moreover, possessed of all the qualifications of mind and body which engage affection and respect. She was very young when she married Nebridius, treasurer of the Emperor Theodosius the Great, and who was for some time prefect of Constantinople; but he died within twenty days after his marriage.

Our saint was addressed by several of the most considerable men of the court, and Theodosius was very pressing with her to accept for her husband Elpidius, a Spaniard, and his near relation. She modestly declared her resolution of remaining single the rest of her days; the emperor continued to urge the affair, and after several decisive answers of the holy widow, put her whole fortune in the hands of the prefect of Constantinople with orders to act as her guardian till she was thirty years old. At the instigation of the disappointed lover, the prefect hindered her from seeing the bishops or going to church, hoping thus to tire her into a compliance. She told the emperor that she was obliged to own his goodness in easing her of her heavy burden of managing and disposing of her own money; and that the favour would be complete if he would order her whole fortune to be divided between the poor and the church. Theodosius, struck with her heroic virtue, made a further inquiry into her manner of living, and conceiving an exalted idea of her piety, restored to her the administration of her estate in 391. The use which she made of it was to consecrate the revenues to the purposes which religion and virtue prescribe. By her state of widowhood, according to the admonition of the apostle, she looked upon herself as exempted even from what the support of her rank seemed to require in the world, and she rejoiced that the slavery of vanity and

luxury was by her condition condemned even in the eyes of the world itself. With great fervour she embraced a life of penance and prayer. Her tender body she macerated with austere fasts, and never ate flesh or anything that had life; by habit, long watchings became as natural to her as much sleep is to others; and she seldom allowed herself the use of a bath, which is thought a necessary refreshment in hot countries, and was particularly so before the ordinary use of linen. By meekness and humility she seemed perfectly crucified to her own will and to all sentiments of vanity, which had no place in her heart nor share in any of her actions. The modesty, simplicity, and sincerity, from which she never departed in her conduct, were a clear demonstration what was the sole object of her affections and desires. Her dress was mean, her furniture poor, her prayers assiduous and fervent, and her charities without bounds. These St Chrysostom compares to a river which is open to all and diffuses its waters to the bounds of the earth and into the ocean itself. The most distant towns, isles, and deserts received plentiful supplies by her liberality, and she settled whole estates upon remote destitute churches. Her riches indeed were almost immense, and her mortified life afforded her an opportunity of consecrating them all to God. Yet St Chrysostom found it necessary to exhort her sometimes to moderate her alms, or rather to be more cautious and reserved in bestowing them, that she might be enabled to succour those whose distresses deserved a preference.

The devil assailed her by many trials, which God permitted for the exercise and perfecting of her virtue. The contradictions of the world served only to increase her meekness, humility, and patience, and with her merits to multiply her crowns. Frequent severe sicknesses, most outrageous slanders and unjust persecutions succeeded one another. Her virtue was the admiration of the whole church, as appears by the manner in which almost all the saints and great prelates of that age mention her. St Amphilius, St Epiphanius, St Peter of Sebaste, and others were fond of her acquaintance and maintained a correspondence with her, which always tended to promote God's glory and the good of souls. Nectarius, Archbishop of Constantinople, had the greatest esteem for her sanctity, and created her deaconess to serve that church in certain remote functions of the ministry, of which that sex is capable, as in preparing linen for the altars and the like. A vow of perpetual chastity was always annexed to this state. St Chrysostom, who was placed in that see in 398, had not less respect for the sanctity of Olympias than his predecessor, and as his extraordinary piety, experience, and skill in sacred learning made him an incomparable guide and model of a spiritual life, he was so much the more honoured by her; but he refused to charge himself with the distribution of her alms as Nectarius had done. She was one of the last persons whom St Chrysostom took leave of when he went into banishment on the 20th

of June in 404. She was then in the great church, which seemed the place of her usual residence; and it was necessary to tear her from his feet by violence. After St Chrysostom's departure she had a great share in the persecution in which all his friends were involved. She was convened before Optatus, the prefect of the city, who was a heathen. She justified herself as to the calumnies which were shamelessly alleged in court against her; but she assured the governor that nothing should engage her to hold communion with Arsacius, a schismatical usurper of another's see. She was dismissed for that time and was visited with a grievous fit of sickness, which afflicted her the whole winter. In spring she was obliged by Arsacius and the court to leave the city, and wandered from place to place. About midsummer in 405 she was brought back to Constantinople and again presented before Optatus, who, without any further trial, sentenced her to pay a heavy fine because she refused to communicate with Arsacius. Her goods were sold by a public auction; she was often dragged before public tribunals; her clothes were torn by the soldiers, her farms rifled by many amongst the dregs of the people, and she was insulted by her own servants and those who had received from her hands the greatest favours. Atticus, successor of Arsacius, dispersed and banished the whole community of nuns which she governed; for it seems, by what Palladius writes, that she was abbess, or at least directress, of the monastery which she had founded near the great church, which subsisted till the fall of the Grecian empire. St Chrysostom frequently encouraged and comforted her by letters; but he sometimes blamed her grief. He bid her particularly to rejoice under her sicknesses, which she ought to place among her most precious crowns, in imitation of Job and Lazarus. In his distress she furnished him with plentiful supplies, wherewith he ransomed many captives and relieved the poor in the wild and desert countries into which he was banished. She also sent him drugs for his own use when he laboured under a bad state of health. Her lingering martyrdom was prolonged beyond that of St Chrysostom; for she was living in 408, when Palladius wrote his Dialogue on the Life of St Chrysostom. The other Palladius, in the Lausiac history which he compiled in 420, tells us that she died under her sufferings and, deserving to receive the recompense due to holy confessors, enjoyed the glory of heaven among the saints. The Greeks honour her memory on the 25th of July, but the Roman Martyrology on the 17th of December.

The saints all studied to husband every moment to the best advantage, knowing that life is very short, that night is coming on apace, in which no one will be able to work, and that all our moments here are so many precious seeds of eternity. If we applied ourselves with the saints to the uninterrupted exercise of good works we should find that, short as life is,

it affords sufficient time for extirpating our evil inclinations, learning to put on the spirit of Christ, working our souls into a heavenly temper, adorning them with all virtues and laying in a provision for eternity. But through our unthinking indolence, the precious time of life is reduced almost to nothing, because the greatest part of it is absolutely thrown away. So numerous is the tribe of idlers and the class of occupations which deserve no other denomination than that of idleness that a bare list would fill a volume. The complaint of Seneca agrees no less to the greatest part of Christians than to the idolaters, that "Almost their whole lives are spent in doing nothing, and the whole in doing nothing to the purpose." Let no moments be spent merely to pass time; diversions and corporeal exercise ought to be used with moderation, only as much as may seem requisite for bodily health and the vigour of the mind. Everyone is bound to apply himself to some serious employment. This and his necessary recreations must be referred to God, and sanctified by a holy intention other circumstances which virtue prescribes; and in all our actions humility, patience, various acts of secret prayer, and other virtues ought, according to the occasions, to be exercised. Thus will our lives be a continued series of good works and an uninterrupted holocaust of divine praise and love. That any parts of this sacrifice should be defective ought to be the subject of our daily compunction and tears.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 17:*

ST BEGGA, widow, in the seventh century: and ST OLYMPIAS, also a widow, called "the glory of widows" in the Eastern churches; the Greeks honour her memory on July 25.

## DECEMBER 18

### SS. RUFUS AND ZOZIMUS, MARTYRS

(A.D. 116)

[From St Polycarp's Epistle, n. 9, p. 94.]

FROM the eminent spirit of sanctity which the actions and writings of the great St Ignatius breathe, we are to form a judgment of that with which these holy martyrs were animated. They had the happiness to share in his chains and sufferings for Christ, and likewise glorified God by martyrdom under Trajan, about the year 116. St Polycarp says of them, "They have not run in vain, but in faith and righteousness; and they are gone to the place that was due to them from the Lord, with whom they also suffered; 'For they loved not the present world, but Him who died, and was raised again by God for us.'" Whether Antioch or Philippi, where they seem to have preached, or what other city of the East was the theatre of their triumph, is uncertain. St Polycarp, writing to the Philippians, says, "Wherefore I exhort all of you that ye obey the word of righteousness,

and exercise all patience, which ye have seen set forth before your eyes, not only in the blessed Ignatius, and Zozimus, and Rufus, but in others that have been among you; and in Paul himself, and the rest of the apostles."

The primitive martyrs rejoiced exceedingly in being called to suffer for Christ. If faith was as lively and active in us, and if the divine love exerted its power in our hearts, we should rejoice at all occasions of practising meekness and patience, which we should look upon as our greatest happiness and gain. To forgive an injury, to bear well an affront, or to suffer with perfect resignation, patience, and humility, is a glorious victory gained over ourselves, by which we vanquish our passions and improve in our souls the habits of those divine virtues in which consists the spirit of Christ and the resemblance we are commanded to bear to him. Occasions occur in almost all our actions; yet we lose them and even suffer our passions to reign in them to the offence of God, the scandal of our holy religion, and the infinite prejudice of our souls.

Do we consider that the least exertion of meekness, humility, or charity is something much greater and more advantageous than the conquest of empires and the whole world could be? For Alexander to have once curbed his anger on ever so small an occasion would have been a far more glorious victory than all his conquests, even if his wars had been just. For nothing is so heroic as for a man to vanquish his passions and learn to govern his own soul.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 18:*

THE EXPECTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY is celebrated in the English dioceses on this date: ST GATIAN, first Bishop of Tours in the third century: ST MAGNENIUS, Abbot of the monastery near Dublin called Kilmainham after him: ST RUFUS and St ZOZIMUS, martyrs: ST WINEBALD, Abbot, 760.

### DECEMBER 19

#### ST NEMESION AND OTHER MARTYRS

(A.D. 250)

[From St Dionysius of Alex., quoted by Eusebius, Hist. lib. vi. c. 41, p. 307, ed. Cantabr.]

IN the persecution of Decius, Nemesion, an Egyptian, was apprehended at Alexandria upon an indictment for theft. The servant of Christ easily cleared himself of that charge, but was immediately accused of being a Christian. Hereupon he was sent to the Augustal prefect of Egypt, and, confessing his faith at his tribunal, he was ordered to be scourged and tormented doubly more grievously than the thieves; after which he was condemned to be burnt with the most criminal amongst the robbers and other malefactors, whereby he had the honour and happiness more perfectly to imitate the death of our divine Redeemer. There stood at the same time near the prefect's tribunal four soldiers, named Ammon, Zeno,

Ptolemy, and Ingenuus, and another person whose name was Theophilus, who, being Christians, boldly encouraged a confessor who was hanging on the rack. They were soon taken notice of and presented to the judge, who condemned them to be beheaded, but was himself astonished to see the joy with which they walked to the place of execution. Heron, Ater, and Isidore, Egyptians, with Dioscorus, a youth only fifteen years old, were all committed at Alexandria in the same persecution. First of all, the judge took the youth in hand and began to entreat him with fair speeches; then he assailed him with various torments; but the generous youth neither would bow at his flatteries nor could be terrified or broken by his threats or torments. The rest, after enduring the most cruel rending and disjointing of their limbs, were burnt alive. But the judge discharged Dioscorus on account of the tenderness of his years, saying he allowed him time to repent and consult his own advantage, and expressing that he was struck with admiration at the dazzling beauty of his countenance. In the Roman Martyrology St Nemesion is commemorated on the 19th of December, the rest of these martyrs on other days.

SS. Meuris and Thea, two holy women at Gaza, in Palestine, when the persecution raged in that city under the successors of Diocletian, bore up bravely against all the cruelty of men and malice of the devil, and triumphed over both to the last moment. Meuris died under the hands of the persecutors, but Thea languished some time after she had passed through a dreadful variety of exquisite torments, as we learn from the author of the life of St Porphyrius of Gaza, written about the close of the fourth century. Their relics were deposited in a church which bore the name of St Timothy.

Can we call to mind the fervour of the saints in labouring and suffering cheerfully for God and not feel a holy ardour glow in our own breasts, and our souls strongly affected with their heroic sentiments of virtue? This St Macarius, of Egypt, used to illustrate by the following familiar apophthegm: "As he that goes into a shop where are ointments and perfumes, and takes a few turns in it, though he neither buys nor tastes of anything, yet he enjoys the scent and is perfumed thereby; even so he that converses with the holy fathers, or reads their actions, derives a salutary influence from them. They show him true humility; and both their discourses and example are of service, and as a wall and fence against the incursions of demons."<sup>1</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 19:*

ST NEMESION, an Egyptian, first accused of theft of which charge he easily cleared himself; but he was immediately charged with being a Christian; he was scourged with far more severity than the thieves; he was then condemned to be beheaded; with him also suffered HERON, ATER, and ISIDORE, Egyptians; DIOSCORUS, a youth only fifteen years old, though he continued firm, was discharged: At this time also were martyred ST MEURIS and ST THEA, two holy women at Gaza; their relics were deposited in a church which bore the name of St Timothy.

<sup>1</sup> St Macarius inter Apothegmata ap. Pritium. p. 233.

DECEMBER 20

ST PHILOGONIUS, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH  
(A.D. 322)

[From the panegyric spoken by St Chrysostom on his festival, t. i. p. 492, ed. Montfauc.]

ST PHILOGONIUS was brought up to the law and made a considerable figure at the bar, being admired for his eloquence and still more for the purity of his manners and the sanctity of his life. This was a sufficient motive for dispensing with the canons, which require some time spent among the clergy before a person be advanced to the highest station in the church. Philogonius was placed in the see of Antioch upon the death of Vitalis in 318; and St Chrysostom mentions the flourishing state of that church in his time as an authentic proof of his zeal and excellent administration. When Arius broached his blasphemies at Alexandria in 318, St Alexander condemned him and sent the sentence in a synodal letter to St Philogonius, who strenuously defended the Catholic faith before the assembly of the council of Nice. In the storms which were raised against the church, first by Maximin II and afterwards by Licinius, St Philogonius deserved the title of Confessor. He died in the year 322, the fifth of his episcopal dignity. His festival was celebrated at Antioch on the 20th of December in the year 386, in which St Chrysostom pronounced his panegyric, touching lightly on his virtues, because, as he says, he left the detail of them to his bishop, Flavian, who was to speak after him.

St Chrysostom extols in the most amiable terms the overflowing peace which this saint now enjoys in a state of bliss, where there are no conflicts, no irregular passions, no more of that cold word, "mine and thine," which fills the whole world with wars, every family with broils, and every breast with restless disquiets, gnawing pains, and prickling thorns. St Philogonius had so perfectly renounced the world and crucified its inordinate desires in his heart that he received in this life the earnest of Christ's spirit, was admitted to the sacred council of the heavenly King, and had free access to the Almighty. A soul must here learn the heavenly spirit and be well versed in the occupations of the blessed if she hopes to reign with them hereafter; she must beforehand have some acquaintance with the mysteries of grace and the functions of divine love and praise.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 20 :*

ST PAUL, a hermit in the tenth century : ST PHILOGONIUS, trained for the law and equally admired for his eloquence, for the purity of his manners, and for the sanctity of his life.

DECEMBER 21

ST THOMAS, APOSTLE  
(FIRST AGE)

[See Tillemont, t. i. p. 355. Ant. Pagi, Critica, vol. i. p. 421. The false Acts of St Thomas are rejected by Pope Gelasius, St. Austin, lib. contra Adimant. c. 12, Contra Faust. lib. xxii. c. 9, and lib. i. de Serm. D. in Monte St Athan. in Synopsi, St Epiph. hær. 47. and St Cyril, cap. 6. This last ascribes these Acts to Thomas, a Manichean. Those in Metaphrastes are taken from them.]

ST THOMAS was a Jew, and probably a Galilean of low condition according to Metaphrastes, a fisherman. He had the happiness to follow Christ, and was made by him an apostle in the year 31.<sup>1</sup> If he appears to have been slow in understanding and unacquainted with secular learning, he made up for this by the candour and simplicity of his heart and the ardour of his piety and desires. Of this he gave a proof when Jesus was going up to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem in order to raise Lazarus to life, where the priests and Pharisees were contriving his death. The rest of the disciples endeavoured to dissuade him from that journey, saying, "Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" But St Thomas said to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."<sup>2</sup> So ardent was his love of his divine Master, even before the descent of the Holy Ghost. When our Lord at his last supper acquainted his disciples that he was about to leave them, but told them for their comfort that he was going to prepare a place for them in his Father's house, our apostle, who vehemently desired to follow him, said, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?"<sup>3</sup> Christ presently rectified his misapprehension by returning this short but satisfactory answer, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh to the Father but by me." By which he gave to understand that by his doctrine and example he had taught men the path of salvation, and that he is the author of the Way that leadeth to life, which he hath both opened and discovered to us; that he is the teacher of that Truth which directs to it; and the giver of that Life of grace here, and of a glorious eternity which is to be obtained by walking in this way and according to this truth.

After our Lord had suffered, was risen from the dead, and on the same day had appeared to his disciples, to convince them of the truth of his resurrection, Thomas, not being with them on that occasion, refused to believe upon their report that he was truly risen, presuming that it was only a phantom or mere apparition unless he might see the very prints of the nails and feel the wounds in his hands and side. On that day seven-night our merciful Lord, with infinite condescension to this apostle's weakness, presented himself again, when he and his colleagues were

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 3.<sup>2</sup> John xi. 16.<sup>3</sup> John xiv. 5, 6.

assembled together, probably at their devotions; and, after the usual salutation of "Peace be unto you," he turned to Thomas and bid him look upon his hands and put his finger into the hole of his side and into the prints of the nails. It is observed by St Austin and others that he sinned by obstinacy, presumption, and incredulity; for the resurrection of Christ was no more than Moses and the prophets had long before foretold. Nor was it reasonable in him to reject the testimony of such eye-witnesses; and this stubbornness might have betrayed him into infidelity. However, his refractoriness was not a sin of malice, and the mercy of our Redeemer not only brought him to saving repentance, but raised him to the summit of holy charity and perfect virtue. St Thomas was no sooner convinced of the reality of the mystery but, penetrated with compunction, awe, and tender love, he cried out, "My Lord and my God."<sup>1</sup> These words St Thomas spoke with an entire faith, believing him truly God, whose humanity only he saw, confessing him omnipotent in overcoming death and hell, and acknowledging his omniscience who knew the doubts and scruples of his heart. The apostle also expressed by them the ardour of his love, which the particle "*my God*" clearly indicates. If we love our God and Redeemer, can we cease sweetly, but with awe and trembling, to call him our Lord and our God, and to beg with torrents of tears that he become more and more perfectly the God and King of our hearts? From this apostle's incredulity Christ mercifully drew the strongest evidence of his resurrection for the confirmation of our faith beyond all cavil or contradiction. Whence St Gregory the Great says,<sup>2</sup> "By this doubting of Thomas we are more confirmed in our belief than by the faith of the other apostles." Some other fathers take notice that our apostle, by this confession, shows himself a perfect theologian, instructed in the very school of truth, declaring in Christ two distinct natures in one and the same person, his humanity by the word "Lord" and his divinity by the word "God." Faith in the beginning stood in need of miracles, by which God impressed the stamp of his authority upon his holy revelation.

After the descent of the Holy Ghost, St Thomas commissioned Thaddæus to instruct and baptize Abgar, King or Toparch of Edessa. This prince, according to the records kept in the church of Edessa, transcribed by Eusebius and mentioned by St Ephrem, had written to Christ to invite him into his kingdom and begging to be cured by him of a distemper with which he was afflicted. Christ, in his answer, told him that he must accomplish the things for which he was sent, and then return to him who sent him; but that immediately after his ascension he would send one of his disciples to the king to heal him, and give life to him and all his family. This promise of our Lord was made good by St Thomas, who, by a special direction of the Holy Ghost, sent Thaddæus,

<sup>1</sup> John xx. 28.

<sup>2</sup> St Greg. Hom. 26 in Evang. .

one of the seventy-two disciples and, according to some, his own brother, to Edessa, who restored the king to his health, baptized him and many others, and planted Christianity in that country. Sophronius mentions that by his apostolic labours he established the faith among the Medes, Persians, Carmanians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians, and other nations in those parts. Modern Greeks mention also the Indians and Ethiopians; but these appellations were sometimes given by the ancients to all the eastern nations. The modern Indians and Portuguese tell us that St Thomas preached to the Brahmins, and to the Indians beyond the great island Taprobana, which some take to be Ceylon, others Sumatra. They add that he suffered martyrdom at Meliapore, or St Thomas's, in the peninsula on this side the Ganges, on the coast of Coromandel, where his body was discovered, with certain marks that he was slain with lances; and that such was the manner of his death is the tradition of all the eastern countries. Eusebius affirms in general that the apostles died by martyrdom. Theodoret and St Asterius of Amasea mention St Thomas among the principal martyrs of the church. St Nilus says that he received the crown of martyrdom after SS. Peter and Paul. St Gaudentius mentions that he was slain by the infidels, and that the miracles which were performed through him show that he still lives with God. The same father and Sophronius testify that he died at Calamina, in India. Beausobre thinks he never preached far beyond Parthia and Persia. For the name of King Gundaphore, mentioned by Leucius, in his false Acts, and his copier, Pseudo Abdias, seems corruptly written for the King of Gundschavur, or Gandisapor, which city was rebuilt by Artaxerxes, who founded the second Persian monarchy and called from his son Schavar, whom the Greeks name Sapor I, who made it his residence. The author of these false Acts gave to the city the name which it bore when he wrote. All the false Acts and the Greek Menæ agree that the infidel king was incensed against the apostle for having baptized some persons of his court (some say his wife and son), that he delivered him over to his soldiers in order to be put to death, and that he was conveyed by them to a neighbouring mountain and there stabbed with a lance. It is certain that his body was carried to the city of Edessa, where it was honoured in the great sepulchres only of SS. Peter and Paul, John and Thomas, among all the apostles, were then known; and it is mentioned to have been at Edessa in the oration on this apostle, compiled in the year 402, published among the works of St Chrysostom. The church of Edessa was certainly most numerous and flourishing in the second, third, and fourth ages.

Many distant churches in the East ascribe their first foundation to St Thomas, especially that of Meliapore; but many of them probably received the faith only from his disciples. The use of the Chaldean language

in the churches, and the dependence on the patriarch of Mosul, which the church of Meliapore and all the Christians of St Thomas in the East profess, seem to show that their first teachers came from the churches of Assyria, in which the patriarchs of Mosul (a city built upon the ruins of Seleucia, erroneously called Babylon) exercise a jurisdiction, and have been for many ages the propagators of the Nestorian heresy, with which they are tinctured. The Portuguese, when they came into the East Indies, found there the St Thomas-Christians, it is said, to the number of fifteen thousand families, on the coast of Malabar. On two festivals which they keep in honour of St Thomas, they resort in great crowds to the place of his burial: on Low-Sunday, in honour of his confession of Christ, which gospel is then read, and chiefly on the 1st of July, his principal feast in the churches of the Indies. John III, King of Portugal, ordered the body of St Thomas to be sought for in an old ruinous chapel which stood over his tomb without the walls of Meliapore. By digging there, in 1523, a very deep vault in form of a chapel was discovered, in which were found the bones of the saint, with a part of the lance with which he was slain and a vial tinged with his blood. The body of the apostle was put in a chest of porcelain, varnished, and adorned with silver. The bones of the prince whom he had baptized, and some other of his disciples, which were discovered in the same vault, were laid in another less precious chest.<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese built a new town about this church, which is called St Thomas's, inhabited by Christians of various denominations and situate hard by Meliapore, which is inhabited by the Indians. Many of the Christians of St Thomas have been brought over to the Catholic faith and communion; but many continue in the Nestorian errors, and in obedience of the Nestorian patriarch of Mosul. Since the Dutch have taken or ruined most of the Portuguese settlements on that coast, the Indian King of Golcond has taken possession of the town of St Thomas, but the Portuguese missionaries continue to attend the Catholics there. The Latins keep the feast of St Thomas on the 21st of December, the Greeks on the 6th of October, and the Indians on the 1st of July.

The apostles were mean and contemptible in the eyes of the world, neither recommended by births, riches, friends, learning, nor abilities. Yet, totally destitute as they were of all those advantages on which men here set so high a price, they were chosen by Christ, made his friends, replenished with his graces and holy charity, and exalted to the dignity of spiritual princes of his kingdom and judges of the world. Blind and foolish are all men who overrate and eagerly pursue the goods of this life; or who so enjoy them as to suffer their hearts to be wedded to them. Worldly pleasures, riches, or honours, if they become the object of our affections,

<sup>1</sup> See Maffei, *Indic.* lib. ii. p. 85; and Lafitau, *Hist. des Conquêtes des Portugais dans le Nouveau Monde*, lib. xi. t. i. p. 327; *Univ. Hist.* vol. 20, c. 31, p. 106.

are, as it were, fetters which fasten us to the earth and clog our souls; and it is so hard to enjoy them with perfect indifference, to consider them barely as a dangerous stewardship, and to employ them only for the advancement of virtue in ourselves and others, that many saints thought it safer utterly to renounce them, and others rejoiced to see themselves removed from what it is difficult to possess and not be entangled by. Are not the maxims of the gospel and the example of Christ, our king and leader, and of all his saints, sufficient to inspire those who enjoy the advantages of this world with a saving fear, and to make them study the various obligations of their stewardship, and by watchfulness, voluntary humiliations, mortification, compunction, assiduous prayer, and conversing on heavenly things by holy meditation or reading, to stand infinitely upon their guard, lest the love of the world or the infection of its pride, vanity, or pleasures seize their hearts. Faith must be extremely weak and unactive in us if we look upon the things of this world in any other light than that in which the gospel places them; if we regard any other goods as truly valuable but those of divine grace and charity, or if we set not ourselves with our whole strength to pursue them by the road of humility, patience, meekness, and piety, in imitation of the saints. The apostles are herein the objects of our veneration, and our guides and models. We honour them as the doctors of the law of Christ; after Him the foundation-stones of his church; the twelve gates and the twelve precious stones of the heavenly Jerusalem; and as the leaders and princes of the saints.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 21:*

ST EDBURGE, virgin: ST THOMAS, Apostle, who had the happiness to follow Christ and was made an Apostle by Him in the year 31 (Matt. x. 3); he is said to have received the crown of martyrdom after St Peter and St Paul.

## DECEMBER 22

### ST ISCHYRION, MARTYR

(A.D. 253)

[From St Dionysius of Alexandria, ap. Eus. lib. vi. c. 42. See Baronius, ad an. 253. n. 107. ed. nov. Lucensis per Venturini, and Annot. in Martyr. Rom.]

ISCHYRION was an inferior officer who attended on a magistrate of a certain city in Egypt, which St Dionysius has not named. His master commanded him to offer sacrifice to the idols; and because he refused to commit that sacrilege, reproached him with the most contumelious and threatening speeches. By giving way to his passion and superstition, he at length worked himself up to that degree of frenzy as to run a stake into the bowels of the meek servant of Christ, who by his patient constancy attained to the glory of martyrdom.

We justly praise and admire the tender piety and heroic fortitude of this holy servant and martyr. It is not a man's condition, but virtue, that

can make him truly great or truly happy. How mean soever a person's station or circumstances may be, the road to both is open to him; and there is not a servant or slave who ought not to be enkindled with a laudable ambition of arriving at this greatness, which will set him on the same level with the rich and the most powerful. Nay, a servant's condition has generally stronger incitements to holiness and fewer obstacles and temptations than most others. But for this he must, in the first place, be faithful to God and ardent in all practices of devotion. Some allege want of time to pray. But their meals, their sleep, their diversions demonstrate that it is not time, but zeal for the divine service, that is wanting. What Christian does not blush at his laziness in this duty when he calls to mind Epictetus's lamp and Cleanthes's labour, who wrought and earned by night what might maintain him in the study of philosophy by day? Prayer in such a station ought not to trespass upon work, but who cannot, even at his work, raise his mind to God in frequent ejaculations! Also industry, faithfulness, with the most scrupulous exactness, obedience, respect, esteem, and sincere love which a servant owes to a master, with a care of their honour and interest, are duties to God, whose will he does and whom he honours in proportion to the diligence and ardour with which he acquires himself of them. Justice, charity, concord, and ready mutual assistance are virtues constantly to be exercised toward fellow-servants, upon which depend the peace, happiness, and good order of the whole family. Patience, meekness, humility, and charity must be called forth on all occasions, especially under reproofs and injuries, which must always be received in silence, and with sweetness, kindness, and a degree of gratitude when they carry any admonitions with them. Perfect resignation to the will of God, and confidence in his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, must be joined with constant cheerfulness and contentedness in a person's station, which brings servants much greater advantages for happiness and removes them from dangers, hazards, and disappointments, more than is generally considered.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 22 :*

ST CYRIL and ST METHODIUS, Bishops in the ninth century; greatly revered in the East for their heroic apostolate, and specially honoured in our own day on July 7, as the patrons of Moravia, Bohemia and the other Slavonic countries : ST ISCHYRION, martyr, gloriously steadfast under pain.

### DECEMBER 23

## ST SERVULUS, CONFESSOR (A.D. 590)

[From St Gregory, Hom. 15, in Evangel. and Dial. lib. iv. c. 14.]

IN this saint was exemplified what our divine Redeemer has taught us of Lazarus, the poor man full of sores, who lay before the gate of the rich man's house. Servulus was a beggar, and had been afflicted with the palsy

from his infancy, so that he was never able to stand, sit upright, lift his hand to his mouth, or turn himself from one side to another. His mother and brother carried him into the porch of St Clement's Church, at Rome, where he lived on the alms of those that passed by. Whatever he could spare from his own subsistence he distributed among other needy persons. The sufferings and humiliation of his condition were a means of which he made the most excellent use for the sanctification of his own soul by the constant exercise of humility, patience, meekness, resignation, and penance. He used to entreat devout persons to read the holy scriptures, and he heard them with such attention as to learn them by heart. His time he consecrated by assiduously singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving to God, and his continual pains were so far from dejecting or distracting him that they proved a most pressing motive for raising his mind to God with greater ardour. After several years thus spent, his distemper having seized his vitals, he perceived his end to draw near. In his last moments he desired the poor and pilgrims, who had often shared in his charity, to sing sacred hymns and psalms by him. Whilst he joined his voice with theirs, he on a sudden cried out, "Silence! do you not hear the sweet melody and praises which resound in the heavens?" Soon after he had spoken those words he expired, and his soul was carried by angels into everlasting bliss, about the year 590. The body of St Servulus was buried in St Clement's Church, and honoured with miracles, according to the Roman Martyrology.

St Gregory the Great concludes the account he gives of him in a sermon to his people by observing that the whole behaviour of this poor sick beggar loudly condemns those who, when blessed with good health and a plentiful fortune, neither do good works nor suffer the least cross with tolerable patience.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 23:*

ST SERVULUS (590), a beggar afflicted with palsy from his infancy; he glorified God by his humility and patience in poverty: ST VICTORIA, virgin and martyr.

#### DECEMBER 24

#### SS. THRASILLA AND EMILIANA, VIRGINS

[From St Gregory the Great, Dial. lib. iv. c. 16, and Hom. 38, in Evang.]

ST GREGORY the Great had three aunts, who were sisters to his father Gordian, the senator, and having by vow consecrated their virginity to God, they practised the exercises of an ascetic or religious life in their father's house. Their names were Thrasilla, who was the eldest, Emiliana, and Gordiana. Thrasilla and Emiliana, renouncing the vanities of the world on the same day, started together in the glorious course to perfection,

and were still more united by the fervour of their hearts and the bands of holy charity than by blood. They lived in their father's house as retired as in a monastery, far removed from the conversation of men; and, exciting one another to virtue by discourse and example, soon made a considerable progress in a spiritual life. They were so disengaged from the world, so careful in mortifying their senses and maintaining a strict union of their souls with God, that they seemed to have forgot their bodies, and arose above all considerations of earthly things. Gordiana joined them in their vow and holy exercises, but flagged by the way and, loving to converse with the world, by degrees admitted it into her heart so as to exclude the Almighty. Thrasilla and Emiliana could not see her unhappy change without the deepest concern and, tempering remonstrances with all the sweetness that the most tender affection and charity could inspire, gained so far upon her that, full of confusion, she promised amendment. This, however, she executed only by halves, appeared often impatient of silence and retirement, and showed too little relish for spiritual exercises and conversation and too much for the world. By this lukewarmness, the good impressions which the zeal of her sisters made in her mind were always worn out again, and after their death she fell from the duties of the state which she had voluntarily taken upon herself. A dreadful example! but such as the world is daily full of; yet others neglect to take warning, and so fall into the same snare. Nothing blinds the understanding and intoxicates the soul more effectually than vanity. The two happy sisters, who persevered in the paths of eternal life, enjoyed the sweetness of divine peace and love, and the comfort and joy of fervour and devotion, and were called to receive the recompence of their fidelity before the fall of Gordiana. St Gregory tells us that Thrasilla was favoured one night with a vision of her uncle, St Felix, pope, who showed her a seat prepared for her in heaven, saying, "Come, I will receive you into this habitation of light." She fell sick of a fever the next day. When in her agony, with her eyes fixed on heaven, she cried out to those that were present, "Depart!—make room!—Jesus is coming!" Soon after these words she breathed out her pious soul into the hands of God on the 24th of December. The skin of her knees was found to be hardened, like the hide of a camel, by her continual prayer. A few days after she appeared to her sister Emiliana, and invited her to celebrate with her the epiphany in eternal bliss. Emiliana fell sick and died on the 8th of January. Both are named on the respective days of their death in the Roman Martyrology.

"Precious in the sight of God is the death of his saints."<sup>1</sup> This is the great triumph of a soul over hell; a spectacle most glorious in the eyes of the whole court of heaven, giving joy to the angels. To us, banished pilgrims on earth, nothing certainly can bring sweeter comfort amidst our

tears, or be a more powerful motive to withdraw our affections from the toys of this world, or to raise our hearts above its frowns, than to have before our eyes the happiness of dying the death of the saints. No one can read without being strongly affected with these sentiments the account which Janus Erythræus (that is, the elegant and ingenious John Victor Rossi), who was then at Rome, gives of the passage of brother John Baptist, a holy Capuchin, out of this world.<sup>1</sup> This humble friar, who was called in the world Alphonsus III, when Duke of Modena, renounced his sovereignty, divested himself of all his worldly goods and, embracing the most austere life of a Capuchin Franciscan in 1629, distinguished himself from his brethren only by a greater fervour in his penitential severities and heavenly contemplation. He died at Rome in 1644, closing his eyes to the world with so much interior joy, such strong desires to go to God, such humility, resignation, holy peace, and sweet breathings of divine love, as to make many in the world envy the choice he had made and grudge that he had purchased so great a happiness at so cheap a rate. We all pray with Balaam that our death may be like that of the saints; but for this we must make the preparation for death the great business of our lives, learn perfectly to die to the world and ourselves, and ground and daily improve ourselves in the spirit of the saints, which is that of sincere humility, patience, resignation, and the most ardent charity.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 24:*

ST THRASILLA and ST EMILIANA, two of the three aunts of St Gregory the Great, who became saints; these two holy women practised the austerities of a religious life in their father's home.

#### DECEMBER 25

#### THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST, OR CHRISTMAS DAY

THE world had subsisted about four thousand years, and all things were accomplished which, according to the ancient prophets, were to precede the coming of the Messias, when Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, having taken human flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and being made man, was born of her for the redemption of mankind. The all-wise and all-merciful providence of God had, from the fall of our first parents, gradually disposed all things for the fulfilling of his promises, and the accomplishing the greatest of all his mysteries, the incarnation of his divine Son. Had man been restored to grace as soon as he had forfeited it, he would not have been sufficiently sensible of the depth of his horrible wounds, nor have had a just feeling of the spiritual blindness, weakness, and wretchedness in which he lay buried under the weight of his guilt. Neither would the infinite mercy, power, and goodness of God, in saving him, have appeared in so great lustre. Therefore man was left grovelling

<sup>1</sup> Janus Nicius Erythreus, Ep. 65.

in his miseries for the space of so many thousand years, only enjoying a glimpse of his future redemption in the promise and expectation of it; which still was sufficient to raise those to it who did not shut their eyes to this light. God always raised several faithful servants, and even when most nations, from following the bent of their passions, fell into the most deplorable spiritual blindness, and abandoned his knowledge and true worship to transfer his honour to the basest of creatures and the most criminal objects, he reserved to himself a peculiar people among which he was known and served, and many were saved through faith and hope in this promised Redeemer, then to come. All this time the saints never ceased with sighs and tears to beg that this “Desired of all Nations”<sup>1</sup> might speedily make his appearance; and by these inflamed desires they both disposed themselves to receive the fruit of his redemption, and moved God to hasten and most abundantly to pour forth his mercy.

God, who with infinite wisdom brings things to maturity and perfection in their proper season, disclosed this to men partially and by degrees. He gave to Adam a promise and some knowledge of it.<sup>2</sup> He renewed the same to Abraham, limiting it to his seed.<sup>3</sup> He confirmed it to Isaac and Jacob.<sup>4</sup> In the prophecy of this latter it was fixed in the tribe of Judah.<sup>5</sup> It was afterwards clearly determined to belong to the posterity of David and Solomon; which was repeated in all the succeeding prophets. In these all the particular circumstances of Christ’s birth, life, death, and spiritual kingdom in his church are expressed; the whole written law which was delivered to Moses consisted of types expressive of the same, or alluding to him. The nearer the time approached the fuller was the revelation of him. The prophecy of turning “swords into ploughshares, and lances into pruning-hooks,”<sup>6</sup> &c., expressed that a profound peace in which the world should be was to be an emblem of the appearance of the “Prince of Peace.” According to the prophecy of Jacob,<sup>7</sup> the sceptre was to be removed from the tribe of Judah, to show the establishment of the new spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, which is to endure to the end of the world. According to Aggæus,<sup>8</sup> and Malachi,<sup>9</sup> the Messiah was to appear whilst the second temple stood, which was that of Solomon, restored after the captivity. Daniel foretold the four great empires which succeeded one another, the first of which were to be destroyed by the latter, viz. : of the Medes, Persians, Macedonians, and Romans, each marked by very distinguishing characters.<sup>10</sup> The seventy weeks of years predicted by Daniel<sup>11</sup> determine the time of the coming of the Messias and of his death. For from the order of King Artaxerxes Longimanus for the rebuilding of Jerusalem seven weeks were to pass in the execution of that work in difficult times; and sixty-two more,

<sup>1</sup> Aggæus ii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Gen. xxvi. and xxviii.

<sup>7</sup> Gen. xlvi. 8, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Dan. ii. 32; v. 20; viii. 3. See Rollin, or Mezengui, or Calmet.

<sup>11</sup> Dan. ix. 21, &c. See Nouveau Comment. t. ix. p. 500.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. iii. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. xlix. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Aggæus ii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. xxii. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Isa. ii. 4; Mich. iv. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Malachi iii. 1.

that is, with these seven, sixty-nine to the manifestation of Christ, who was to be slain in the middle of the seventieth week, and his death was to be followed by the destruction of the city and temple; it was to expiate iniquity, to establish the reign of eternal justice, and to accomplish the visions and prophecies. The Gentiles had also received some glimmerings of this great event; as from the prediction of Balaam foretelling a star to arise from Jacob.<sup>1</sup> All over the East, at the time of our Saviour's birth, a great deliverer of mankind was firmly expected, as the pagan historians expressly affirm. Suetonius<sup>2</sup> writes as follows: "There had prevailed all over the East an ancient and constant notion that the fates had decreed that about that time there should come out of Judea those who should obtain the empire of the world." And Tacitus says,<sup>3</sup> "A firm persuasion had prevailed among a great many that it was contained in the ancient sacerdotal books that, about this time, it should come to pass that the East should prevail, and that those who should come out of Judea should obtain the empire of the world." Josephus, the Jewish historian, took occasion from hence to flatter Vespasian, as if he had been the Messias foretold by the prophets;<sup>4</sup> and the great number of impostors who pretended to this character among the Jews in that and the following century is a clear proof of this belief amongst them about the time.<sup>5</sup>

When Jesus Christ was born, the seventy weeks of Daniel were near being accomplished, and the sceptre was departed from the house of Judah, whether we restrain this to that particular tribe, or understand it of the whole Jewish nation, so as to give a main share only to that tribe. For Herod, though a Jew by religion, was by birth an Idumean, as Josephus, whose testimony is unexceptionable, informs us, relating how his father, Antipas, who chose rather to be called by the Greek name Antipater, was made, by King Alexander Jannæus, governor of his own country, Idumea. Herod was raised to the throne by the Romans, excluding the princes of the Asmonean or Jewish royal family, whom Herod entirely cut off; as he did also the principal members of the Sanhedrim, or great council, by which that nation governed itself by its own laws under its kings. This tyrant, moreover, stripped that people of all their other civil rights. Soon after, they were made a Roman province; nor was it long before their temple was destroyed and their whole nation dispersed, so that the Jews themselves are obliged to confess that the time foretold by the prophets for the coming of the Messias is long since elapsed. Christ was born at the time when the Roman or fourth empire, marked by Daniel, was exalted to its zenith by Augustus, who reigned fifty-seven years from his first command of the army at nineteen years of age: and forty-four from the defeat of Antony, his partner in the empire, in the battle of Actium. God had preordained

<sup>1</sup> Numb. xxiv. 17. <sup>2</sup> In Vespas.

<sup>3</sup> Tacit. in Annal.

<sup>4</sup> See the life of Josephus.

<sup>5</sup> Acts v. 36; xxi. 38. Joseph. Ant. lib. xx. c. 2 et 6; lib. viii. c. 1. Idem. De Bellis Jud. lib. vii. c. 51, &c. Read Dissert. sur les Faux Messies, in the new Fr. Comment. t. xi. p. 21.

the greatness of the Roman empire for the more easy propagation of the gospel over so many nations which formed one monarchy. Augustus had then settled it in peace. A decree was issued by Augustus, and published all over the Roman empire, ordaining that all persons, with their estates and conditions, should be registered at certain places, according to their respective provinces, cities, and families. It was the custom at Rome to make a census or registration of all the citizens every five years, which term was called a *lustrum*. This general register of all the subjects of the empire, with the value of their estates, was probably ordered that the strength and riches of each province might be known. It was made in Syria and Palestine by Cyrius. Quintilius Varus was at that time pro-consul of Syria, on whom the procurator or governor of Judea in some measure depended after it was made a Roman province. Cyrius succeeded Varus in the government of Syria about ten years after Herod's death, when his son Archelaus was banished and Judea made a province of the empire. Cyrius then made a second register; but he made the first in the time of Varus, in which he might act as extraordinary deputy, at least for Palestine, then governed by Herod; or this enregistration is all attributed to him because it was finished by him afterwards. This decree was given by the emperor for political views of state; but proceeded from an overruling order of providence that, by this most authentic public act, it might be manifest to the whole world that Christ was descended of the house of David and tribe of Judah. For those of this family were ordered to be registered at Bethlehem, a small town in the tribe of Judah, seven miles from Jerusalem to the south-west. This was called David's-town; and was appointed the place where those that belonged to his family were to be enrolled.<sup>1</sup> Joseph and Mary were perhaps natives of this place, though they then lived at Nazareth, ninety miles almost north from Jerusalem. Micheas had foretold<sup>2</sup> that Bethlehem (called by the Jebusites who first built it, Ephrata) should be ennobled by the birth of Christ. Mary, therefore, though with child, by the special direction of providence, undertook this tedious journey with her husband in obedience to the emperor's order for their enrolment in that city; and it is believed that with St Joseph, also Mary and her infant Jesus were enrolled; of which Origen,<sup>3</sup> St Justin,<sup>4</sup> Tertullian,<sup>5</sup> and St Chrysostom<sup>6</sup> make no doubt. All other characters or marks of the Messias, mentioned by the prophets, agree to Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup>

To show the divine Jesus's descent from David and Judah, the evangelists, St Matthew and St Luke, give his pedigree—but designedly different, that this noted character of the Messias might be demonstrated by his double genealogy. The reason of this difference was at that time public and known

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 1, 2, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Mich. ii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Orig. Hom. ii. in Luc.

<sup>4</sup> St Justin, Apol. i. vol. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Tert. lib. iv. cont. Marcion.

<sup>6</sup> St Chrys. in Mat. hic.

<sup>7</sup> See Calmet's Diss. sur les Caractères du Messie, suivant les Juifs, at the head of his comm. on St Matthew.

to everyone, and so was not mentioned. It seems most probable that St Luke gives the natural and St Matthew the legal line of Joseph, who had been adopted into the latter by the frequent case specified in the law of Moses. St Chrysostom puts us in mind to take notice of the astonishing mercy and humility of our divine Redeemer in this circumstance, that he did not disdain, in order to save sinners, to choose a pedigree in which several notorious sinners are named; so much did he humble himself to satisfy for, and to cure our vanity and pride. The same father, upon reading the exordium of St Matthew's gospel and of this pedigree, breaks out into this vehement pathos,<sup>1</sup> "What dost thou say, O evangelist? Thou hast promised to speak of the only begotten Son of God, and dost thou name David? Admire that the natural Son of God, who is without a beginning, would suffer himself to be called the son of David, that he might make you the Son of God." The circumstances of the great mystery, and the wonderful manner in which it was performed, ought to attract our whole attention, and be the object of our pious meditations and devotions, particularly on this holy festival.

The Blessed Virgin and St Joseph, after a painful journey of at least four days in a mountainous country, arrived at Bethlehem. There they found the public inns, or caravansaries (such as is customary in the East), already full; nor were they able to procure any lodgings in the town, every one despising and rejecting their poverty. Do we spiritually invite Jesus into our hearts and prepare a lodging for his reception in our affections? This is the entertainment he is infinitely desirous of, and which he came from heaven to seek. By spiritual nakedness, coldness, sloth, or sin, a Christian soul refuses him admittance. Of such treatment he will justly complain much more than of the people of Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary, in this distress, retired into a cave made on the side of a rock, which is called a stable, because it served for that purpose, perhaps for the use of those who lodged at the caravansary. It is a common tradition that an ox and an ass were in it at that time. This circumstance is not mentioned in holy scripture, but it is supported by the authority of St Jerom, St Gregory Nazianzen, St Gregory of Nyssa, and Prudentius produced by Baronius; and if the blessed travellers came not on foot, they must have had their own ass with them. In this place the holy mother, when her time was come, brought forth her divine Son without the pain of other mothers; remaining both in and after his conception and birth a pure virgin. With what joy and holy respect did she behold and adore the new-born infant; the Creator of all things made man for us!<sup>1</sup> She wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, such as her poverty had allowed her to prepare, and with holy awe laid him in the manger. "With what solicitude did she watch him!" says St Bonaventure.<sup>2</sup> "With what reverence did she touch him whom she

<sup>1</sup> St Chrys. Hom. 2, in Mat. t. vii. p. 21, ed. Ben.

<sup>2</sup> St Bonav. Vit. Christi, c. 10.

knew to be her Lord! In like manner are we to admire, with St Bernard, "How the holy man Joseph would often take him upon his knees, smiling at him." We ought also to contemplate how the choirs of angels, descending from above in raptures of astonishment, adore their God in this new wonderful state to which mercy and love have reduced him, and salute him with hymns of praise. We are invited to join them in the persons of the holy shepherds. God was pleased that his Son, though born on earth with so much secrecy, and in a state of the most astonishing humiliation, should be acknowledged by men, and receive the first fruits of their homages and devotion upon his first appearance among them. Who are they that are favoured with the honour of this heavenly call? The great ones of the world are passed over on this occasion. They are chosen whose character, by their very station, is simplicity and humility; and whose obscurity, poverty, and solitude removed them from the principal dangers of worldly pride, and were most agreeable to that love and spirit of retiredness, penance, and humility which Christ came to recommend. Nor can we doubt but they adorned their state with the true spirit of this simplicity and devotion. These happy persons were certain shepherds who, being strangers to the sensuality and pride of the world, were at that time keeping the watches of the night over their flock. Whilst the sensual and the proud were asleep in soft beds, or employed in pursuits of voluptuousness, vanity, or ambition, an angel appeared to these humble poor men, and they saw themselves encompassed with a great brightness. They were suddenly seized with exceeding great fear, but the heavenly messenger said to them, "Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of exceeding great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign to you: you shall find the child wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger." Suddenly then appeared with the angel a multitude of heavenly spirits praising God and saying, "Glory be to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good-will." After the departure of the angels, the wondering shepherds said one to another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us." They immediately hastened thither and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. Here they did homage to the Messias as to the spiritual king of men, and then returned to their flocks, glorifying and praising God.<sup>1</sup> Mary was very reserved amidst these occurrences and continued silent in her deportment, but observed all these things, with secrecy pondering them in her heart.

The angel calls this wonderful mystery a subject of great joy to all the people. Indeed, our hearts must be insensible to all spiritual things if they do not overflow with holy joy at the consideration of so glorious a

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 9, 20.

mercy, in which is displayed such an excess of the divine goodness, and by which such inestimable benefits and so high an honour accrue to us. The very thought and foreknowledge of this mystery comforted Adam in his banishment from Paradise. The promise of it sweetened the laborious pilgrimage of Abraham. The same encouraged Jacob to dread no adversity, and Moses to brave all dangers and conquer all difficulties in delivering the Israelites from the Egyptian slavery. All the prophets saw it in spirit with Abraham, and they rejoiced. If the expectation of it gave the patriarchs such joy, how much ought the accomplishment to create in us! Joy is defined the delight of a rational creature arising from the possession of a desired object. It must then be proportioned to the nature of the possession; consequently, it ought to be as much greater in us as the fruition of a good surpasses the promise, possession the hope, or fruit the blossom. This St Peter Chrysologus illustrates with regard to this difference of the Old and New Law as follows: "The letter of a friend," says he, "is comfortable, but his presence is much more welcome; a bond is useful, but the payment more so; blossoms are pleasing, but only till the fruit appears. The ancient fathers received God's letters, we enjoy his presence; they had the promise, we the accomplishment; they the bond, we the payment." Christians who rejoice with a worldly, vain, or carnal mirth are strangers to the Spirit of God and his holy joy. Some exterior marks of this joy are allowed, provided they be not sought for themselves, but such as suit a penitential state and Christian gravity, both by their nature and extreme moderation that is held in them; and, lastly, provided motives of virtue sanctify them, and they express and spring from an interior spiritual joy, which is altogether holy. If sensuality have any share in our festivals, they are rather heathenish Bacchanals than Christian solemnities, and on them we feed and strengthen those passions which Christ was born only to teach us to subdue. To sanctify this feast we ought to consecrate it to devotion, and principally to the exercises of adoration, praise, and love. This is the tribute we must offer to our new-born Saviour when we visit him in spirit with the good shepherds. With them we must enter the stable and contemplate this mystery with a lively faith, by which, under the veils of this infant body, we discover the infinite majesty of our God.

To contemplate immensity shut up in a little body, omnipotence clothed with weakness, the eternal God born in time, the joy of angels bathed in tears, is something far more wonderful than to consider God creating a world out of nothing, moving the heavens, and weighing the universe with a finger. This is a mystery altogether unutterable; to be adored in silence and in raptures of admiration not to be declared by words. "How can anyone speak of the wonder which is here wrought amongst us?" says St Fulgentius.<sup>1</sup> "A man of God, a creature of his Creator, one who is

<sup>1</sup> St Fulgentius, Serm. ii. de Nativ.

finite, and was born in time, of Him who is immense and eternal.” Another eminent servant of God cries out upon this mystery,<sup>1</sup> “O Lord our God, how admirable is thy name over all the earth! Truly thou art a God working wonders. I am not now astonished at the creation of the world, at the heavens, at the earth, at the succession of days and seasons; but I wonder to see God inclosed in the womb of a virgin, the Omnipotent lain in a manger, the eternal Word clothed with flesh.” The eternal Father, when he brought his Son into the world, laid on them his commands, saying, “Let all the angels of God adore him.”<sup>2</sup> Though they neither wanted invitation nor command, their own devotion being their prompter. O! what must have been their sentiments when they saw a stable converted into heaven by the wonderful presence of its king, and beheld that divine infant, knowing his weak hands to be those which framed the universe and bordered the heavens with light; and that by Him both the heavens and the earth subsist? Are they not more astonished to contemplate him in this humble hidden state than seated on the throne of his glory? Shall not man, for whom this whole mystery is wrought, and who is so much favoured and so highly privileged and ennobled by the same, burn with a holy ardour to perform his part in this duty, and make the best return he is able of gratitude, adoration, and praise? To these exercises we ought to consecrate a considerable part of our devotions, especially on this festival, repeating with fervour the psalms which chiefly consist of acts of divine praises, the hymn of thanksgiving used by the church, commonly ascribed to St Ambrose and St Austin, and the angelical hymn, “Glory and praise be given by all creatures to God alone in the highest heavens; and peace (or pardon, reconciliation, grace, and all spiritual happiness) to men of goodwill.” In our devotions, also, acts of love ought to challenge a principal part, the Incarnation of the Son of God being the mystery of love; or, properly, a kind of ecstasy of love in which God strips himself, as it were, of the rays of his glory to visit us, to become our brother, and to make himself in all things like to us.

Love is the tribute that God challenges of us in a particular manner in this mystery: this is the return which he requires of us for all he has done and suffered for us. He says to us, “Son, give me thy heart.” To love him is our sovereign happiness, and the highest dignity and honour to which a creature can aspire. But we are bound to it upon the title of the strictest justice. God, being infinite in all perfections, is infinitely worthy of our love, and we ought to love him with an infinite love if we were capable of it. We are also bound to love him in gratitude, especially for the benefit of his Incarnation, in which he has given us himself, and this in order to rescue us from extreme miseries and to bestow on us the most incomprehensible graces and favours. Man had sinned and was become

<sup>1</sup> Arnoldus Bonnevallis, Serm. de Nativ. inter Opera St Cypriani.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. i. 6.

the associate of the devil. Almost all the nations of the earth had, by blindly following their passions, at length fallen into a total forgetfulness of God who made them, and deified first inanimate stars and planets, afterwards dead men, the most impious and profligate of the human race; also the works of their own hands, often beasts, monsters, and their own basest passions: the most infamous crimes they authorized by the sanction of pretended religious rites; and from every corner of the earth vice cried to heaven for vengeance. The Jews, who had been favoured by God above all other nations, and declared his peculiar people, were nevertheless abandoned to envy, jealousy, pride, and other vices; so that even amongst them the number of privileged souls which remained faithful to God appeared to be very small. Such was the face of the earth when the Son of God honoured it with his divine presence and conversation. Who would not have imagined when he heard that God was coming to visit the earth that it must have been to destroy it by fire from heaven, as he had done Sodom, and to bury its rebellious inhabitants in hell? But no: whilst the world was reeking with blood and oppressions, and overrun with impiety, he came to save it. How does the ingratitude and baseness of man set off his love! At the sight of our miseries his compassion was stirred up the more tenderly and his bowels yearned toward us. He came to save us, when we deserved nothing at his hands but eternal torments. Also the manner in which he came to visit us shows yet in a more astonishing manner the excess of his goodness and charity for us. To engage our hearts more strongly, he has made himself like to us taking upon him our nature. "God was seen upon earth, and has conversed with men."<sup>1</sup> The word was made flesh."<sup>2</sup> God is born an infinite babe, the Eternal is become a young child, the Omnipotent is made weak, he who is essentially infinite and independent is voluntarily reduced to a state of subjection and humbled beneath his own creatures. It is love, and the love of us sinful men, that hath done all this.

St Francis of Assisium appeared not able to contain himself through excessive tenderness of love when he spoke of this mystery and named the Little Babe of Bethlehem. St Bernard says, "God on the throne of his majesty and greatness commands our fear and our homages: but in his littleness especially our love." This father invites all created beings to join him in love and adoration, and to listen in awful silence to the proclamation of the festival in honour of this mystery made in the Roman Martyrology: "Hear ye heavens," says he, "and lend your ears, O earth. Stand in raptures of astonishment and praise, O you whole creation, but you chiefly, O man. 'Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, was born in Bethlehem of Judah.' O short word of the Eternal Word abridged for us! but filled with heavenly sweetness. The affection of this melting

<sup>1</sup> Baruch iii. 38.

<sup>2</sup> John i. 14.

sweetness struggles within, earnestly labouring widely to diffuse its teeming abundance, but finds not words. For such is the grace and energy of this speech that it relishes less if one *iota* in it be changed.” In another sermon, having repeated the same words, he adds, “At these words my soul melts and my spirit boils within me, hastening with burning desire to publish to you this exultation and joy.”<sup>1</sup> If this love were kindled in our breast, nothing were sweeter to us than to abide in spirit at the feet of Jesus, pondering the motive, that is, the excess of divine love, which brought him from heaven, and contemplating the other circumstances of this mystery. How ought we to salute and adore those sacred hands which are weakened, wrapped in clouts, or stretched on the manger, for love of us, but which move the heavens and uphold and govern the universe. Also those divine feet which will undergo so many fatigues, and at length be bored on the cross for us. That blood which purples his little veins and dyes his blessed cheeks, but which is the price of our redemption, and will be one day poured out upon the cross. How is this sweet countenance, which is the joy of angels, now concealed! But it will one day be buffeted, bruised, and covered with filthy phlegm. How ought we respectfully to honour it! His holy flesh, more pure than angels, even now begins to suffer from the cold and other hardships: do we not desire to defend it from these injuries? But this cannot be allowed. Nor could anyone oppose the work of our redemption. Sin is the cause of all that he suffers, and shall not we detest and shun that monster? The loving eyes of the divine Jesus pierce our souls. They are now bathed in tears; though, as St Bernard says, “Jesus weeps not as other children, or at least not on the same account.” They cry for their wants and weakness, Jesus for compassion and love for us. May these precious tears move the heavenly Father to show us mercy; and may they soften, wash, and cleanse our souls. “These tears excite in me both grief and shame,” says the same father, “when I consider my own insensibility amidst my spiritual miseries.” But nothing in this contemplation will more strongly move us than to penetrate into the interior employment of this divine Saviour’s holy soul, and to consider the ardour of his zeal in the praises of his Father, and in his supplications to Him on our behalf; his compassion for us, and the constant oblation which he made of himself to obtain for us mercy and grace. Such meditations and pious entertainments of our souls will have great force in kindling the fire of holy love in our hearts. But all endeavours would be weak so long as we do not labour effectually to remove all obstacles to this holy love in our affections. To cure these disorders is the chief end of the birth of Christ.

Christ’s actions are no less instructions to us than his discourses. His life is the gospel reduced to practice. It is enough to study it to under-

<sup>1</sup> St Bern. Serm. vi. in Vigil. Nativ. p. 771.

stand well his doctrine: and to become perfect we must imitate his example. By this he instructs us in his very nativity, beginning first to practise, then to preach.<sup>1</sup> Hence the manger was his first pulpit, and in it he teaches us the cure of our spiritual maladies. He is come such as the holy prophets had desired and foretold, such as our miseries required, our true Physician and Saviour. He wanted not on earth honours or sceptres; he came not to taste of our vanities: riches and glory he abounded with. He came among us to seek our miseries, our poverty, our humiliation, to repair the injuries our pride had offered to the Godhead, and to apply a remedy to our souls. Therefore he chose not a palace or a great city; but a poor mother, a little town, a stable. He who adorns the world and clothes the lilies of the fields beyond the majesty of Solomon in his glory, is wrapped up in rags and laid in a manger. And this he chose to be the great sign of his appearance. "And this shall be a sign to you," said the angel to the shepherds, "you shall find the child wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger." Are then rags and a manger the wonderful sign of our God appearing on earth? Are these the works of the great Messiah, of whom the prophets spoke so glorious things? This it was that scandalized the Jews in his birth. "Take from us those cloths and that manger," said Marcion, unjustly prepossessed against the humility of such an appearance. But this is a sign which God himself hath chosen and set up for his standard; a sign to be the contradiction to our pride, covetousness, and sensuality. And do not we wonder at the stupendous virtue and efficacy of this sign, so shocking to the senses and passions, when we see how it drew to it the little and great, the magians and the shepherds, who knew their Saviour by it, and returned glorifying God? How many have enrolled themselves under the same standard!

Christ set up this mark for us: it is our powerful instruction. "The grace of God the Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us," says the apostle.<sup>2</sup> All men, the rich and the poor, the great and the small, all who desire to have a share in his grace, or in his kingdom. And what breast can be so stony as not to be softened at this example? Our inveterate diseases seemed almost unconquerable. But Christ is come, the omnipotent Physician, to apply a remedy to them. Our disorders flow from three sources. "All that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of eyes, and the pride of life."<sup>3</sup> What is concupiscence of the flesh but the inordinate inclination to gratify the senses? Christ, to encourage us to renounce this love of sensual pleasures, and to satisfy his justice by his own sufferings for our offences in this way, begins to suffer as soon as he begins to live. At his very birth he exposes his delicate body to the inclemency of the severest season of the year, to the hard boards of the manger for a cradle, to hunger, and to a privation of the

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Tit. ii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> 1 John ii. 16.

most ordinary conveniences and necessities of human life. His tender and divine limbs tremble with cold, his eyes stream with tears, and he consecrated the first moments of his life to suffering and pain. He who directs the seasons, governs the universe, and disposes all things, has ordained everything for this very end. Yet we study in all things to flatter our senses, to pamper our bodies in softness and every gratification, and to remove everything that is hard or painful. Is this to imitate the model of penance and mortification that is set us? Christ, by these sufferings, and this privation of all things, shows us that he came to satisfy the justice of his Father, and to repair the injury done to his glory by our sins. But by the same he teaches us the remedies of our disorders, and shows us how they are to be applied to our souls; as he came to instruct us in all we want to know and do in order to save our souls and to reform all our irregular passions and manners. Could he have preached this more powerfully than he has done by the example of his birth? How comes it, notwithstanding, that we are not yet sufficiently persuaded that we cannot be saved at a cheaper rate than by a constant practice of self-denial and penance?

By concupiscence of the eyes is understood the love of riches; the second root of the disorders which reign in the world, and the foundation of its false maxims. This our Saviour teaches us to root out of our hearts by embracing the most austere poverty, and consecrating it in his divine body, to use the expression of St Bernard. He shows us the danger of riches, and the crime and disorder of a love or eager pursuit of them. Riches are good in the designs of providence; and what is more noble than to have the means of relieving the distresses of others? This motive all pretend in amassing riches; but seek in them only the interest of self-love. The rich and the poor adore them in their desires. This is the disorder. Men may be poor in spirit in the midst of riches. But this is truly an extraordinary grace. Those that are blessed with riches must fear them, lest they find admittance into their hearts. They are, moreover, most frequently either the effect or the cause of iniquity; faulty either in their acquisition or their use. In their acquisition, in which injustices are so frequent, that Seneca says, "Every rich man is either unjust, or the heir of one who was unjust." And the organ of the Holy Ghost declares, "He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent."<sup>1</sup> At least a desire of riches usually attends the acquisition, which is in many ways inordinate; and is always a spiritual fever which destroys the relish of heavenly goods, and consumes the very vitals of the interior life. It is an idolatry, as St Paul calls it,<sup>2</sup> and the same master who commanded the idols to be banished out of the world, obliges us to banish the love of riches out of our hearts. The least reserve draws on us the curse of heaven.

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxviii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Col. iii. 5.

This desire in the rich is insatiable. The prophet Isaiah said to them,<sup>1</sup> " Woe to you that join house to house, and lay field to field, even to the end of the place: shall you alone dwell in the midst of the earth? " And the Roman satirist reproached one that seemed to design to make all Rome a single house for himself. The rich are anxious for superfluities, and are tormented by extravagant desires. The poor have here often as much to correct; the desire of possessions is as criminal as an attachment to the possession; it often exposes to a thousand injustices, under subtle disguises, and shuts the heart to divine grace. Let all labour in the world, but not for the world; and let all inordinate desires and anxiety be cut off. Let the poor place themselves nearest to Jesus Christ and, learning from him the happiness of their condition, study their own sanctification in it. Let the rich look upon their possessions as a burden hard to bear well, and labour to sanctify them by a good use, and by imitating Christ our model in a perfect spirit of disengagement and poverty. Is not the life of a Christian to be penitential? Where is that of the rich such? Vicious inclinations are roused and strengthened by riches; and by incentives and opportunities the passions often reign in the heart of the rich with uncontrollable empire. To other dangers we must add the misfortune that the rich are surrounded by flatterers, and that others artfully conspire to blind and betray them amidst their dangers. How often does it happen that ministers of God deceive them, calling evil good, and good evil; soothing their passions or disguising their obligations. But without entering into this detail, do not the curses of Christ suffice to make all Christians tremble at the dangers of this state? By this means, though Christ declares riches one of the most dangerous obstacles of grace, many saints have changed them into the means of their salvation, joining with their possession a spirit of poverty and disengagement, and making them the instruments of justice and charity. It is therefore neither to riches nor to poverty that Christ promises the kingdom of heaven; but to the disengagement of the heart from the love of riches in whatever state persons live.

Pride being the third and principal source of our disorders, and our deepest wound, humility is displayed in the most wonderful manner in the birth of the Son of God. What is the whole mystery of the Incarnation but the most astonishing humiliation of the Deity? To expiate our pride, and to repair the injury offered to the adorable Trinity by our usurpation, the eternal Son of God divests himself of his glory and takes upon him the form of Man. Who would not expect to hear, that when God descended upon earth, the heavens would bend beneath him, the earth be moved at his sight, and all nature arrayed with magnificence? " He came not," says St Chrysostom,<sup>2</sup> " so as to shake the world at the presence of his majesty:

<sup>1</sup> Isa. v. 8.

<sup>2</sup> St Chrysost. in Ps. 50, p. 536, t. v.

nor did he appear in thunder and lightning, as on Mount Sinai; but he descended sweetly, no man knowing it." "While all things were in deep silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, thy Almighty Word came down from heaven, from thy royal throne."<sup>1</sup> No one of the great ones of the world is apprized of this great mystery. Those few chosen persons to whom he is pleased to reveal himself, are called to adore him in the closest secrecy and silence. If this be the manner in which he comes, what is the appearance which he makes among men? How comes the King of heaven to make his appearance in such a state of abasement, and so destitute of due honour and of every convenience! His birth is, notwithstanding, the masterpiece of infinite wisdom, mercy, and omnipotence. These perfections nowhere shine more admirably than in this mystery; for he came thus to be our Physician, to correct our mistaken judgment of things, to heal our pride, to bring, and to encourage us to use the remedy to our grievous maladies, and to overcome our reluctance to its bitterness by taking it first himself. Therefore humility was to be his ensign, and the angel gave his rags and manger to the shepherds for the mark by which he was to be known. "This shall be to you a sign." What do we behold! A God poor, a God humbled, a God suffering! And can we any longer entertain thoughts of sensuality, ambition, or pride?

If this humility of a God be most astonishing, is not the blindness and pride of man, after such an example, something, if possible, still more inconceivable? Christ is born thus only to atone for our pride, to show us the beauty of humility, and to plant it in our hearts. Humility is his standard; and the spirit of sincere humility is the mark by which his disciples must be known to be his. Can we profess ourselves his followers, can we look upon the example which he has set us, and yet continue to entertain thoughts of ambition and pride? To learn the interior perfect spirit of humility and all other virtues, we cannot make use of any more powerful means than serious and frequent meditation on his nativity and divine life. Placing ourselves in spirit at the manger, after the tender of our homages by acts of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and love, we must study in him the lessons of all virtues, and must present to our new-born king our earnest supplications to obtain of him all those gifts and graces which he comes to bestow upon us. Let us learn humility from the lowliness in which he appears, and from the humility of his sacred heart. Let us learn meekness by beholding the sweetness and patience with which this God-man receives all injuries from men and from the elements. Let us learn resignation from the indifference with which he bears cold, wants, wrongs, and whatever is sent him. Let us learn obedience from the most perfect submission of our blessed Saviour to the will of his heavenly Father, from his birth offering himself without reserve, even to the death of the

<sup>1</sup> *Wisd. xviii. 14, 15.*

cross. Let us learn charity from the ardour of his divine love. Let us learn a contempt of the world and its perishable goods from the extreme poverty which Christ made his voluntary choice. Let not the spirit and maxims of the world reign any longer in our hearts, since Christ has shown us such powerful motives, and presented us such sovereign remedies against them. Have we not hitherto been idolaters of ourselves by pride, idolaters of the world by vanity and avarice, and idolaters of our flesh by living enslaved to our senses? These idols we renounce at baptism; but have we not lived in a perfidious violation of these vows? Unless we now sincerely renew these engagements, and banish these idols out of our affections, Jesus can never be spiritually born in our souls, and we can never inherit his spirit, which was the end of his carnal nativity. He is meek, and the king of peace, the lover of purity and of chaste affections, and the avowed enemy to every spirit of pride, hatred, and revenge. We must earnestly invite and entreat him who vehemently desires to be born in our hearts, that he prepare our souls to receive him by his graces, that he cleanse them by his mercy, and by inspiring us with sincere compunction, that he banish every inordinate passion, fill us with his holy spirit, and by it reign in all our affections, thoughts, and actions; that as by his nativity he is become all ours, so we may be altogether his. Without this condition we frustrate in ourselves the end of his coming; he is not born for us, unless by his spirit he be born in us. Let us conjure him by the infinite love with which he came for this very purpose, that he suffer us not wretchedly to defeat this his mercy. For this happiness we ought ardently to repeat that petition which he himself has put into our mouths, "Thy kingdom come."

The custom of one priest celebrating several masses on the same day prevailed in many places on great festivals.<sup>1</sup> Prudentius, in his twelfth hymn, "On the Crowns of Martyrs," mentions that on the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, the 29th of June, the pope said mass first at the Vatican, and afterwards in the Church of St Paul without the city. The popes on Christmas-day formerly said three masses, the first in the Liberian basilica, the second in the Church of St Anastasia, the third in the Vatican, as Benedict XIV proves from ancient Roman orders or missals. St Gregory the Great speaks of saying three masses on this day.<sup>2</sup> This custom of the popes was universally imitated and is everywhere retained, though not of precept. Pouget<sup>3</sup> says, that these three masses are celebrated to honour the triple birth of Christ; the first, by which he proceeds from his Father before all ages; the second, from the Blessed Virgin Mary; and the third, by which he is spiritually born in our souls by faith and charity. That Christ was born on the 25th of December, Pope Benedict XIV proves by

<sup>1</sup> See *Bona Rer. Liturg.* lib. i. c. 18, n. 6; *Joseph. Vicecomes, De antiquis missae ritibus,* lib. iii. c. 28, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *St Greg. Hom. viii. in Evang.*

<sup>3</sup> *Instit. Cathol.* t. i. p. 814.

the authority of St Chrysostom, St Gregory of Nyssa, St Austin, &c., and answers the objections of Scaliger and Samuel Basnage.<sup>1</sup> He doubts not but the Greek church originally kept this festival on the same day;<sup>2</sup> and he takes notice, that among the principal feasts of the year it holds the next place after Easter and Whitsunday.<sup>3</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 25:*

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST OR CHRISTMAS DAY: and ST EUGENIA, virgin and martyr.

## DECEMBER 26

### ST STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

[See Acts vi. vii., and Tillemont, t. ii. p. 1, Cave, &c.]

THAT St Stephen was a Jew is unquestionable, himself owning that relation in his apology to the people. But whether he was of Hebrew extraction and descended of the stock of Abraham, or whether he was of foreign parents incorporated and brought into that nation by the gate of proselytism, is uncertain. The name Stephen, which signifies a crown, is evidently Greek; but the priest Lucian, in the history of the discovery of his relics, and Basil of Seleucia,<sup>4</sup> inform us, that the name Cheliel, which in modern Hebrew signifies a crown, was engraved on his tomb at Caphragamala. It is generally allowed that he was one of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord; for immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost, we find him perfectly instructed in the law of the gospel, endowed with extraordinary measures, both of the interior and exterior gifts of that divine Spirit which was but lately shed upon the church, and incomparably furnished with miraculous powers. The church of Christ then increased daily, and was illustrious for the spirit and practice of all virtues, but especially for charity. The faithful lived and loved one another as brethren, and were of one heart and one soul.

The rich sold their estates to relieve the necessities of the poor and deposited the money in one common treasury, the care whereof was committed to the apostles, to see the distribution made as everybody's necessity required. Heaven alone is free from all occasions of offence, and the number of converts being very great, the Greeks (that is, the Christians of foreign countries, who were born and brought up in countries which spoke chiefly Greek or at least were Gentiles by descent, though proselytes to the Jewish religion before they came over to the faith of Christ) murmured against the Hebrews, complaining that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. The apostles, to provide a speedy remedy,

<sup>1</sup> De Gestis Christi D. c. 17, n. 45, p. 411. See F. Honoré, Règles de Crib. lib. iii. Diss. 2. Art. 1, and Tillemont, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> N. 67, loco cit. p. 422.

<sup>3</sup> N. 57, p. 417.

<sup>4</sup> Basil Seleuc. Or. de St Stephano.



SAINT STEPHENUS

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assembled the faithful, and observed to them that they could not relinquish the duties of preaching and other spiritual functions of the ministry, to attend to the care of tables; and recommended to them the choice of seven men of an unblemished character, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, who might superintend that affair, that so themselves might be freed from distractions and incumbrances, the more freely to devote themselves without interruption to prayer and preaching the gospel. This proposal was perfectly agreeable to the whole assembly, who immediately pitched on Stephen, "a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost," and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch. All these names are Greek; whence some think they were chosen among the Greeks in order to appease the murmurs that had been raised. But it frequently happened that Hebrews changed their names into Greek words of a like import when they conversed with Greeks and Romans, to whom several names in the Oriental languages sounded harsh, and were difficult to pronounce. Stephen is named first of the deacons, as Peter is of the apostles, says St Austin. Hence he is styled by Lucian, archdeacon.

St Stephen had the primacy and precedence among the deacons newly elected by the apostles, as St Chrysostom observes, and being filled with the Holy Ghost, preached and pleaded the cause of Christianity with undaunted courage, confirming his doctrine by many public and unquestionable miracles. The number of believers were multiplied in Jerusalem, and a great multitude, even of the priests, obeyed the faith. The distinguished zeal and success of our holy deacon stirred up the malice and envy of the enemies of the gospel, who bent their whole force and all their malice against him. The conspiracy was formed by the Libertines (or such as had been carried captives to Rome by Pompey, and had since obtained their freedom), those of Cyrene in Lybia, of Alexandria, Cilicia, and Lesser Asia, who had each a distinct synagogue at Jerusalem. At first they undertook to dispute with St Stephen; but finding themselves unequal to the task and unable to resist the wisdom and spirit with which he spoke, they suborned false witnesses to charge him with blasphemy against Moses and against God. The indictment was laid against him in the Sanhedrim, and the saint was hauled thither. After the charge was read, Caiphas, the high priest, ordered him to make his defence. The main point urged against him was that he affirmed that the temple would be destroyed, that the Mosaic sacrifices were but shadows and types, and were no longer acceptable to God, Jesus of Nazareth having put an end to them. It pleased God to diffuse a heavenly beauty and a shining brightness on the saint's face, whilst he stood before the council, so that to all that were present it seemed as if it had been the countenance of an angel. According to the licence given him by the high priest to speak for himself, he made his apology, but in such a manner as boldly to preach Jesus Christ in the

Sanhedrim itself. He showed that Abraham, the father and founder of their nation, was justified, and received the greatest favours of God without the temple; that Moses was commanded to erect a tabernacle, but foretold a new law and the Messiah; that Solomon built the temple, but it was not to be imagined that God was confined in houses made by hands, and that the temple and the Mosaic law were temporary ministrations, and were to give place when God introduced more excellent institutions. The martyr added, that this he had done by sending the Messiah himself; but that they were, like their ancestors, a stiff-necked generation, circumcised in body but not in heart, and always resisting the Holy Ghost; and that as their fathers had persecuted and slain many of the prophets who foretold the Christ, so they had betrayed and murdered Him in person, and though they had received the law by the ministry of angels, they had not observed it.

This stinging reproach touched them to the quick and kindled them into a rage, gnashing with their teeth at the holy martyr and expressing all the symptoms of unbridled passion. The saint, not heeding what was done below, had his eyes and heart fixed on higher objects, and being full of the Holy Ghost and looking up steadfastly to the heavens, saw them opened, and beheld his divine Saviour standing at the right hand of his Father appearing by that posture ready to protect, receive, and crown his servant. With this vision the saint was inexpressibly ravished, his soul was inspired with new courage, and a longing to arrive at that bliss a glimpse of which was shown him. His heart overflowed with joy and in an ecstasy, not being able to forbear expressing his happiness in the very midst of his enemies, he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.” The Jews became more hardened and enraged by hearing the saint’s declaration of this vision; and calling him a blasphemer, resolved upon his death without any further process. In the fury of their blind zeal they stayed not for a judicial sentence nor for the warrant of the Roman governor, without which no one could at that time be legally put to death amongst them. But stopping their ears against his supposed blasphemies, they with great clamour rushed upon him, furiously hauled him out of the city, and with a tempest of stones satiated their rage against him. The witnesses who, according to the Levitical law, were to begin the execution in all capital cases,<sup>1</sup> threw their clothes at the feet of Saul, who thus partook of their crime.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime the holy martyr prayed, saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice and the greatest earnestness, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” When he said this he had fallen asleep in the Lord. This word is used by the Holy Ghost elegantly to express the sweetness of the death of the just, which is to them a rest after the toils of this painful life—a secure harbour after the

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xvii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxii. 20, and vii. 57.

dangers of this mortal pilgrimage and the gate to eternal life. The edification and manifold advantages which the church received from the martyrdom of this great and holy man compensated the loss which it sustained in him. Certain devout men took order to inter him in a decent manner and made great mourning over him, though such a death was his own most glorious triumph and unparalleled gain. The priest Lucien, who recounts the manner of the miraculous discovery of his relics in the fifth century, informs us that they were deposited about twenty miles from Jerusalem, by the direction of Gamaliel and at his expense.<sup>1</sup> St Stephen seems to have suffered towards the end of the same year in which Christ was crucified.

In the whole life of our divine Redeemer we have the most perfect pattern of meekness. During his ministry he meekly bore with the weakness, ignorance, and prejudices of some; with the perverseness, envy, and malice of others; with the ingratitude of friends, and the pride and insolence of enemies. How affecting is the most patient silence which he held in the courts of unjust judges, and through the whole course of his passion! How did he confirm this example which he had given us by spending his last breath in fervent prayer for his murderers! With what ardour and assiduity did he press upon us the practice of this virtue of meekness, and inculcate its indispensable obligation and unspeakable advantage! St Stephen inherited more perfectly this spirit in proportion as he was more abundantly replenished with the Holy Ghost. No one who is passionate, unforgiving, and revengeful, can be a follower of the meek and humble Jesus. In vain do such assume to themselves the honour of bearing his name. In charity, meekness, and humility, consists the very spirit of Christianity; and scarce anything dishonours religion more than the prevalence of the opposite spirit in those who make a profession of piety.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 26:*

ST COMMAN, Abbot and founder of the Church of Roscommon, since translated to Elphin, is commemorated in Ireland on this date: St JARLATH, Bishop of Tuam, 540: and St STEPHEN, the first martyr. His name signifies "a crown" and was engraved on his tomb at Caphragamala. He is said to have been one of the seventy-two disciples of Our Lord.

## DECEMBER 27

### ST JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

[See Tillemont, t. i. p. 330; Calmet, t. vii. et viii.; Ceillier, t. i. p. 364; Reading, &c.]

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, who is styled in the gospel, "The beloved disciple of Christ," and is called by the Greeks "The Divine," was a Galilean, the son of Zebedee and Salome, and younger brother of St James

<sup>1</sup> See on the 3rd of August.

the Great, with whom he was brought up to the trade of fishing. From his acquaintance with the high priest Caiphas, St Jerom infers that he was a gentleman by birth; but the meanness of his father's trade, and the privacy of his fortune sufficiently prove that his birth could not much distinguish him in the world, neither could his education give him any tincture of secular learning. His acquaintance with the high priest may be placed to some other account. Nicephorus Calixtus, a modern Greek historian of the fourteenth century (in whom, amidst much rubbish, several curious anecdotes are found), says, we know not upon what authority, that St John had sold a paternal estate to Annas, father-in-law to Caiphas, a little before the death of our Lord. Before his coming to Christ he seems to have been a disciple to John the Baptist, several thinking him to have been that other disciple that was with St Andrew when they left the Baptist to follow our Saviour;<sup>1</sup> so particularly does our Evangelist relate all the circumstances, through modestly concealing his own name, as in other parts of the gospel. He was properly called to be a disciple of our Lord, with his brother James, as they were mending their nets<sup>2</sup> on the same day, and soon after Jesus had called Peter and Andrew. These two brothers continued still to follow their profession, but upon seeing the miraculous draught of fishes, they left all things to attach themselves more closely to him.<sup>3</sup> Christ gave them the surname of Boanerges, or sons of thunder,<sup>4</sup> to express the strength and activity of their faith in publishing the law of God without fearing the power of man. This epithet has been particularly applied to St John, who was truly a voice of thunder in proclaiming aloud the most sublime mysteries of the divinity of Christ. He is said to have been the youngest of all the apostles, probably about twenty-five years of age, when he was called by Christ; for he lived seventy years after the suffering of his divine Master. Piety, wisdom, and prudence equalled him in his youth to those who with their grey hairs had been long exercised in the practice and experience of virtue; and, by a pure and blameless life he was honourable in the world. Our divine Redeemer had a particular affection for him above the rest of the apostles; insomuch that when St John speaks of himself, he saith that he was "The disciple whom Jesus loved"; and frequently he mentions himself by this only characteristic; which he did not out of pride to distinguish himself, but out of gratitude and tender love for his blessed Master. If we inquire into the causes of this particular love of Christ towards him, which was not blind or unreasonable, the first was doubtless, as St Austin observes, the love which this disciple bore him; secondly, his meekness and peaceable disposition by which he was extremely like Christ himself; thirdly, his virginal purity. For St Austin tells us that,<sup>5</sup> "The singular privilege of his chastity rendered him worthy of the

<sup>1</sup> John i. 37; St Chrys. hom. 17, in Joan; St Epiph. hær. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. iv. 2. <sup>3</sup> Luke v. 11. <sup>4</sup> Mark iii. 17.

<sup>5</sup> St Aug. Hom. 124, in Joan.

more particular love of Christ, because being chosen by him a virgin, he always remained such." St Jerom sticks not to call all his other privileges and graces the recompense of his chastity, especially that which our Lord did him by recommending in his last moments his virgin mother to the care of this virgin disciple.<sup>1</sup> St Ambrose, St Chrysostom, St Epiphanius, and other fathers frequently make the same reflection. Christ was pleased to choose a virgin for his mother, a virgin for his precursor, and a virgin for his favourite disciple; and his church suffers only those who live perfectly chaste to serve him in his priesthood, where they daily touch and offer his virginal flesh on his holy altar. In heaven virgins follow the spotless Lamb wherever he goes.<sup>2</sup> Who then can doubt but purity is the darling virtue of Jesus? "who feeds among the lilies"<sup>3</sup> of untarnished chastity. For "he who loves purity of heart will have the king his friend." Another motive of the preference which Jesus gave to this apostle in his intimacy and predilection, was his perfect innocence and simplicity without guile in his youth. Virtue in that age has peculiar charms to Christ, and is always a seed of extraordinary graces and blessings.

The love which Jesus bears is never barren. Of this his sufferings and death are the strongest proof. As St John had the happiness to be distinguished by Christ in his holy love, so was he also in its glorious effects. Though these principally consisted in the treasure of interior graces and virtues, exterior tokens, helps, and comforts were not wanting. This appears from the familiarity and intimacy with which his divine Master favoured him above the rest of the apostles. Christ would have him with Peter and James privy to his Transfiguration, and to his agony in the garden; and he showed St John particular instances of kindness and affection above all the rest. Witness this apostle's lying in our Saviour's bosom at the last supper; it being then the custom among the Jews often to lie along upon couches at meals, so that one might lean his head upon the bosom of him that lay before him: which honour Christ allowed St John.<sup>4</sup> No tongue certainly can express the sweetness and ardour of the holy love which our saint on that occasion drew from the divine breast of our Lord, which was the true furnace of pure and holy love. St John repeats this circumstance several times in his gospel to show its importance and his grateful remembrance. We discover in the holy scriptures a close particular friendship between St John and St Peter, which was doubtless founded in the ardour of their love and zeal for their divine Master. When St Peter durst not, as it seems, says St Jerom, propound the question to our Lord, who it was that should betray him, he by signs desired St John to do it, whose familiarity with Christ allowed him more easily such a liberty, and our Lord gave him to understand that Judas was the wretch, though, at least, except St John, none that were present seemed to have

<sup>1</sup> St Hier. lib. i. in Jovinian, c. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Apoc. xiv. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cant.

<sup>4</sup> John xiii. 25.

understood his answer, which was only given by the signal of the traitor's dipping a morsel of bread with him in the dish. St Chrysostom says, that when our Lord was apprehended and the other apostles fled, St John never forsook him; and many imagine that he was the disciple who being known to the high priest, got Peter admitted by the servants into the court of Caiphas.

Our saint seems to have accompanied Christ through all his sufferings; at least he attended him during his crucifixion, standing under his cross, owning him in the midst of arms and guards, and in the thickest crowds of his implacable enemies. Here it was that our Lord declared the assurance he had of this disciple's affection and fidelity, by recommending with his dying words, his holy mother to his care; giving him the charge to love, honour, comfort, and provide for her with that dutifulness and attention which the character of the best and most indulgent mother challenges from an obedient and loving son. What more honourable testimony could Christ have given him of his confidence, regard, and affection, than this charge? Accordingly St John took her to his home, and ever after made her a principal part of his care. Christ had at the same time given her to St John for his mother, saying to her, "Woman, behold thy son." Our Lord disdained not to call us all brethren, as St Paul observes. And he recommended us all as such to the maternal care of his own mother: but amongst these adoptive sons St John is the first-born. To him alone was given this special privilege of being treated by her as if she had been his natural mother, and of reciprocally treating her as such by respectfully honouring, serving, and assisting her in person. This was the recompence of his constancy and fervour in his divine Master's service and love. This holy apostle, though full of inexpressible grief for the death of his divine Master, yet left not the cross and saw his side opened with a spear; was attentive to the whole mystery and saw the blood and water issue from the wound, of which he bore record. It is believed that he was present at the taking down of our Lord's body from the cross and helped to present it to his most blessed mother, and afterwards to lay it in the sepulchre, watering it with abundance of tears, and kissing it with extraordinary devotion and tenderness.

When Mary Magdalen and other devout women brought word that they had not found Christ's body in the sepulchre, Peter and John ran immediately thither, and John, who was younger and more nimble, running faster, arrived first at the place. Some few days after this, St John went a-fishing in the lake of Tiberias with other disciples; and Jesus appeared on the shore in a disguised form. St John, directed by the instinct of love, knew him and gave notice to Peter: they all dined with him on the shore; and when dinner was ended, Christ walked along the shore questioning Peter about the sincerity of his love, gave him the charge of his church,

and foretold his martyrdom. St Peter seeing St John walk behind, and being solicitous for his friend, asked Jesus what would become of him; supposing that as Christ testified a particular love for him, he would show him some extraordinary favour. Christ checked his curiosity by telling him that it was not his business if he should prolong John's life till he should come; which most understand of his coming to destroy Jerusalem; an epoch which St John survived. Some of the disciples, however, misapprehended this answer so far as to infer that John would remain in the body till Christ shall come to judge the world: though St John has taken care in his gospel to tell us that no such thing was meant. After Christ's ascension, we find these two zealous apostles going up to the temple and miraculously healing a poor cripple. Our two apostles were imprisoned, but released again with an order no more to preach Christ, but no threats daunted their courage.<sup>1</sup> They were sent by the college of the apostles to confirm the converts which Philip the Deacon had made in Samaria.<sup>2</sup> St John was again apprehended by the Jews, with the rest of the apostles, and scourged; but they went from the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> When St Paul went up to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion, he saw there only St Peter and St James the Less, St John being probably absent. But St Paul, going thither in the fourteenth year after his conversion, addressed himself to those who seemed to be pillars of the church, chiefly Peter and John, who confirmed to him his mission among the infidels.<sup>4</sup> About that time St John assisted at the council which the apostles held at Jerusalem in the year 51. For St Clement of Alexandria tells us, that all the apostles attended in it. That father says, that Christ at his ascension preferred St Peter, St James the Less, and St John to the rest of the apostles, though there was no strife or pre-eminence amongst any in that sacred college, and this St James was chosen Bishop of Jerusalem. St Clement adds, that our Lord particularly instructed these three apostles in many sacred mysteries, and that the rest of the apostles received much holy science from them.<sup>5</sup>

St John seems to have remained chiefly at Jerusalem for a long time, though he sometimes preached abroad. Parthia is said to have been the chief scene of his apostolical labours. St Austin sometimes quotes his first epistle under the title of his Epistle to the Parthians;<sup>6</sup> and by a title then prefixed to it in some copies it seems to have been addressed to the Jews that were dispersed through the provinces of the Parthian empire. Certain late missionaries in the East Indies assure us, that the inhabitants of Bassora, a city upon the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates, on the Persian gulf, affirm, by a tradition received from their ancestors, that St John planted the Christian faith in their country. He came to Jerusalem in the year 62

<sup>1</sup> Acts iv. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Acts viii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Acts v. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. ii. 9. Acts xv.

<sup>5</sup> Clem. Alex. ap. Eus. Hist. lib. ii. c. 1, p. 44, ed. Cantab.

<sup>6</sup> St Aug. Quæst. Evang. lib. iii. c. 39.

to meet the rest of the apostles who were then living, when they chose in council St Simeon, bishop of that church after the martyrdom of St James the Less. It seems to have been after the death of the Blessed Virgin that St John visited Lesser Asia, making those parts his peculiar care, and residing at Ephesus, the capital of that country. It is certain that he was not come thither in 64, when St Paul left St Timothy bishop of that city. St Irenæus tells us, that he did not settle there till after the death of SS. Peter and Paul. St Timothy continued still Bishop of Ephesus till his martyrdom in 97. But the apostolical authority of St John was universal and superior, and the charity and humility of these two holy men prevented all differences upon account of their jurisdiction. St John preached in other parts and took care of all the churches of Asia which, St Jerom says, he founded and governed. Tertullian adds that he placed bishops in all that country; by which we are to understand that he confirmed and governed those which SS. Peter and Paul had established, and appointed others in many other churches which he founded. It is even probable that in the course of his long life, he put bishops into all the churches of Asia: for while the apostles lived, they supplied the churches with bishops of their own appointing by the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and by virtue of their commission to plant the church.

St John, in his extreme old age, continued often to visit the churches of Asia, and sometimes undertook journeys to assume to the sacred ministry a single person whom the Holy Ghost had marked out to him. Appollonius, not the Roman senator, apologist, and martyr, but a Greek father who wrote against the Montanists, and confuted their pretended prophecies step by step, about the year 192, assures us that St John raised a dead man to life at Ephesus. A certain priest of Asia having been convicted of writing a fabulous account of the voyages of St Paul and St Thecla, in defence and honour of that apostle, was deposed by St John. St Epiphanius affirms, that St John was carried into Asia by the special direction of the Holy Ghost, to oppose the heresies of Ebion and Cerinthus. St Irenæus relates that St John, who ordinarily never made use of a bath, went to bathe on some extraordinary occasion, but understanding that Cerinthus was within, started back, and said to some friends that were with him, "Let us, my brethren, make haste and be gone, lest the bath, wherein is Cerinthus the enemy of the Truth, should fall upon our heads." Dr Conyers Middleton, in his posthumous works, pretends this anecdote must be false, because inconsistent with this apostle's extraordinary meekness. But St Irenæus tells us he received this account from the very mouth of St Polycarp, St John's disciple, whose behaviour to Marcion is an instance of the same spirit. This great apostle would teach his flock to beware of the conversation of those who wilfully corrupted the truth of religion, and by their ensnaring speeches endeavoured to seduce others. This maxim he inculcates in his

second epistle,<sup>1</sup> but this precaution was restrained to the authors of the pestilential seduction. Nevertheless, the very characteristic of St John was universal meekness and charity towards all the world. But towards himself he was always most severe; and St Epiphanius tells us, that he never wore any clothes but a tunic and a linen garment, and never ate flesh; and that his way of living was not unlike that of St James, Bishop of Jerusalem, who was remarkable for austerity and mortification.<sup>2</sup>

In the second general persecution, in the year 95, St John was apprehended by the proconsul of Asia and sent to Rome, where he was miraculously preserved from death when thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. On account of this trial, the title of martyr is given him by the fathers, who say that thus was fulfilled what Christ had foretold him, that he should drink of his cup.<sup>3</sup> The idolaters, who pretended to account for such miracles by sorcery, blinded themselves to this evidence, and the tyrant Domitian banished St John into the isle of Patmos, one of the Sporades in the Archipelago. In this retirement the apostle was favoured with those heavenly visions which he has recorded in the canonical book of the Revelations, or of the Apocalypse: they were manifested to him on a Sunday in the year 96. The first three chapters are evidently a prophetic instruction given to seven neighbouring churches of Asia Minor, and to the bishops who governed them. The three last chapters celebrate the triumph of Christ, the judgment and reward of his saints. The intermediate chapters are variously expounded. By these visions God gave St John a prospect of the future state of the church. His exile was not of long continuance; for Domitian being slain in September in 96, all his edicts and public acts were declared void by a decree of the senate on account of his excessive cruelty; and his successor, Nerva, recalled all those whom he had banished. St John, therefore, returned to Ephesus in 97, where he found that St Timothy had been crowned with martyrdom on the preceding 22nd of January. The apostle was obliged, by the pressing entreaties of the whole flock, to take upon him the particular government of that church, which he held till the reign of Trajan. St John, in imitation of the high priest of the Jews, wore a plate of gold upon his forehead, as an ensign of his Christian priesthood, as Polycrates informs us. St Epiphanius relates the same of St James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, and the author of the history of the martyrdom of St Mark the Evangelist, attributes to him the same ornament. St John celebrated the Christian Pasch on the 14th day of the moon, agreeing as to time with the Jewish passover; but was so far from holding the Jewish rites of obligation in the New Law, that he condemned that heresy in the Nazarites, and in Ebion and Cerinthus. As his apostolic labours were chiefly bestowed among the Jews, he judged such a conformity, which was then allowable, conducive to their conversion.

<sup>1</sup> 2 John x.

<sup>2</sup> St Epiph. Hær. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xx. 23. See St James's Life, July 25.

The ancient fathers informs us that it was principally to confute the blasphemies of Ebion and Cerinthus, who denied the divinity of Christ, and even his pre-existence before his temporal birth, that St John composed his gospel. Another reason was, to supply certain omissions of the other three gospels, which he read and confirmed by his approbation. He therefore principally insists on the actions of Christ, from the commencement of his ministry to the death of the Baptist, wherein the others were sparing; and he largely records his discourses, mentioning fewer miracles. It being his principal aim to set forth the divinity of Christ, he begins with the eternal generation and his creating the world; and both his subject and manner of treating it is so sublime and mysterious, that Theodoret calls his gospel "a theology which human understanding can never fully penetrate and find out." Hence he is compared by the ancients to an eagle, soaring aloft within the clouds, whither the weak eye of man is unable to follow him; and by the Greeks he is honoured with the title of The Divine. St Jerom relates, that "when he was earnestly pressed by the brethren to write his gospel, he answered he would do it, if by ordering a common fast they would all put up their prayers together to God"; which being ended, replenished with the clearest and fullest revelation coming from heaven, he burst forth into that preface: "In the beginning was the word," &c. St Chrysostom and other fathers mention that the evangelist prepared himself for this divine undertaking by retirement, prayer, and contemplation. Some think he wrote his gospel in the isle of Patmos; but it is the more general opinion that he composed it after his return to Ephesus, about the year of our Lord 98, of his age ninety-two, after our Lord's ascension sixty-four. This apostle also wrote three epistles. The first is Catholic, or addressed to all Christians, especially his converts whom he presses to purity and holiness of manners, and he cautions them against the crafty insinuations of seducers, especially the Simonians and Cerinthians. The other two epistles are short, and directed to particular persons: the one a lady of honourable quality called, as it seems, Electa (though some think this rather an epithet of honour than a proper name); the other Gaius, or Caius, a courteous entertainer of all indigent Christians; rather one of that name at Derbe, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles,<sup>1</sup> than the Caius of Corinth, of whom St Paul speaks.<sup>2</sup> The style and sentiments in St John's gospel and in these epistles are the same; and the same inimitable spirit of charity reigns throughout all these writings.

The largest measures of this charity with which our apostle's breast was inflamed, he expressed in the admirable zeal which he showed for the souls of men; in which service he spent himself without ever being weary in journeys, in preaching, in enduring patiently all fatigues, breaking through all difficulties and discouragements, shunning no dangers that he

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xvi. 23.

might rescue men from error, idolatry, or the snares of vice. A remarkable instance is recorded by Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius. When St John returned from Patmos to Ephesus, he made a visitation of the churches of Lesser Asia to correct abuses and supply them with worthy pastors. Coming to a neighbouring city, after having made a discourse, he observed a young man in the company of a fair stature and pleasing aspect, and being much taken with him, he presented him to the bishop whom he had ordained for that see, saying, "In the presence of Christ, and before this congregation, I earnestly recommend this young man to your care." The bishop took the trust upon him and promised to discharge it with fidelity. The apostle repeated his injunction and went back to Ephesus. The young man was lodged in the bishop's house, instructed, kept to good discipline, and at length baptized and confirmed by him. When this was done, the bishop, as if the person had been now in a state of security, began to slacken the reins and be less watchful over him. This was quickly perceived by a company of idle, debauched wretches, who allured the youth into their society. By bad company he soon forgot the precepts of the Christian religion, and passing from one degree of wickedness to another, he at length stifled all remorse, put himself at the head of a band of robbers and, taking to the highway, became the most cruel and profligate of the whole band. Some time after, St John was again called to the same city, and when he had settled other affairs, said to the bishop, "Restore to me the trust which Jesus Christ and I committed to you in presence of your church." The bishop was surprised, imagining he meant some trust of money. But the saint explained himself that he spoke of the young man, and the soul of his brother which he had entrusted to his care. Then the bishop, with sighs and tears, said, "Alas! he is dead." "What did he die of?" said our saint. The bishop replied, "He is dead to God, is turned robber, and instead of being in the church with us, he hath seized on a mountain, where he lives with a company of wicked men like himself." The holy apostle having heard this, rent his garments and fetching a deep sigh said, with tears, "Oh! what a guardian have I provided to watch over a brother's soul!" Presently he called for a horse and guide, and rode away to the mountain where the robber and his gang kept their rendezvous; and being made prisoner by their sentinels, he did not offer to fly or beg his life, but cried out, "It is for this that I am come; lead me to your captain." They conducted the saint to him, who stood at first armed to receive him; but when he saw it was St John, was seized with a mixture of shame and fear, and began to make off with precipitation and confusion. The apostle, forgetting his feebleness and old age, pursued him full speed, and cried out after him in these words: "Child, why do you thus fly from me, your father, unarmed and an old man? My son, have compassion on me. There is room for repentance;

your salvation is not irrecoverable. I will answer for you to Jesus Christ. I am ready most willingly to lay down my life for you, as Jesus Christ laid down his for all men. I will pledge my soul for yours. Stay, believe me, I am sent by Christ." At these words the young man stood still, with his eyes fixed upon the ground; then throwing away his arms, he trembled and burst into tears. When the apostle came up, the penitent, bathed in tears, embraced his tender father, imploring forgiveness; but he hid his right hand, which had been sullied with many crimes. By his sighs and bitter compunction he endeavoured to satisfy for his sins as much as he was able, and to find a second baptism in his tears, as our author St Clement emphatically expresses it. The apostle, with wonderful condescension and affection, fell on his knees before him, kissed his right hand which the other endeavoured in confusion to conceal, gave him fresh assurances of the divine pardon, and, earnestly praying for him, brought him back to the church. He continued some time in that place for his sake, praying and fasting with him and for him, and comforting and encouraging him with the most affecting passages of the holy scriptures. Nor did he leave the place till he had reconciled him to the church, that is, by absolution restored him to the participation of the sacraments.

This charity, which our great saint was penetrated with and practised himself, he constantly and most affectionately pressed upon others. It is the great vein that runs through his sacred writings, especially his epistles, where he urges it as the great and peculiar law of Christianity, without which all pretensions to this divine religion are vain and frivolous, useless and insignificant: and this was his constant practice to his dying day. St Jerom relates<sup>1</sup> that when age and weakness grew upon him at Ephesus, so that he was no longer able to preach or make long discourses to the people, he used always to be carried to the assembly of the faithful by his disciples with great difficulty; and every time said to his flock only these words, "My dear children, love one another." When his auditors, wearied with hearing constantly the same thing, asked him why he always repeated the same words, he replied, "Because it is the precept of the Lord, and if you comply with it, you do enough": an answer, says St Jerom, worthy the great St John, the favourite disciple of Christ, and which ought to be engraved in characters of gold, or rather to be written in the heart of every Christian. St John died in peace at Ephesus, in the third year of Trajan (as seems to be gathered from Eusebius's chronicle), that is, the hundredth of the Christian era, or the sixty-sixth from our Lord's crucifixion, the saint being then about ninety-four years old, according to St Epiphanius. Some amongst the ancients pretend that St John never died, but are very well confuted by St Jerom and St Austin. St John was buried on a mountain

<sup>1</sup> St Hier. in Galat. c. 6.

without the town. The dust of his tomb was carried away out of devotion, and was famous for miracles, as St Austin, St Ephrem, and St Gregory of Tours mention. A stately church stood formerly over this tomb, which is at present a Turkish mosque. The 26th of September is consecrated to the memory of St John in the Greek church; and in the Latin the 27th of December.

The great love which this glorious saint bore to his God and Redeemer, and which he kindled from his master's divine breast, inspired him with the most vehement and generous charity for his neighbour. Without the sovereign love of God no one can please him. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is charity."<sup>1</sup> "Let us therefore love God, because God first loved us."<sup>2</sup> This is the first maxim in a spiritual life, which this apostle most tenderly inculcates. The second is that our fidelity in shunning all sin, and in keeping all God's commandments, is the proof of our love for God,<sup>3</sup> but especially a sincere love for our neighbour is its great test. "For he that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?" says St John.<sup>4</sup> Our blessed Redeemer, in the excess of his boundless charity for all men, presses this duty upon all men, and, as an infinitely tender parent, conjures all his children to love one another even for his sake. He who most affectionately loves them all will have them all to be one in him, and therefore commands us to bear with one another's infirmities and to forgive one another all debts or injuries, and as much as in us lies "to live peaceably with all men."<sup>5</sup> This is the very genius and spirit of his law, without which we can have nothing of a Christian disposition, or deserve the name of his children or disciples. Neither can we hope with a peevish, passionate, or unforgiving temper ever to be heirs of heaven. Harmony, goodness, unanimity, mutual complacency, and love will be the invariable temper of all its blessed inhabitants. No ruffling passion, no unfriendly thought, will ever be found amongst them. Those happy regions are the abode of everlasting peace and love. We must learn and cultivate this temper of heaven here on earth, or can never hope to get thither. We are all professedly travelling together towards that blessed place where, if we are so happy as to meet, we shall thus cordially embrace each other. Does not this thought alone suffice to make us forget little uneasinesses and to prevent our falling out by the way? St John teaches us that to attain to this heavenly and Christian disposition, to this twofold charity towards God and towards our neighbour for his sake, we must subdue our passions and die to the inordinate love of the world and ourselves. His hatred and contempt of the world was equal to his love of God, and he cries out to us, "My little children, love not the world, nor

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iv. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xii. 14; Rom. xii. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. iv. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Ib. iii., iv., &c.

<sup>5</sup> Ib. iv. 20.

the things which are in the world. If anyone loves the world the charity of the Father is not in him."

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 27:*

ST JOHN, Apostle and evangelist, styled in the Gospel "the beloved disciple" and called "the divine" by the Greeks; he was a younger brother of St James the Great: ST THEODORUS, Abbot. Another ST THEODORUS is honoured on the following date.

### DECEMBER 28

## THE HOLY INNOCENTS

(Matthew xi. 16)

OUR Divine Redeemer was persecuted by the world as soon as he made his appearance in it. For he was no sooner born than it declared war against him. Herod, in persecuting Christ, was an emblem of Satan and of the world. That ambitious and jealous prince had already sacrificed to his fears and suspicions the most illustrious part of his council, his virtuous wife Mariamne, with her mother Alexandra, the two sons he had by her, and the heirs to his crown, and all his best friends. Hearing from the magians who were come from distant countries to find and adore Christ that the Messias, or spiritual king of the Jews, foretold by the prophets, was born among them, he trembled lest he was come to take his temporal kingdom from him. So far are the thoughts of carnal and worldly men from the ways of God, and so strangely do violent passions blind and alarm them. The tyrant was disturbed beyond measure and resolved to take away the life of this child, as if he could have defeated the decrees of heaven. He had recourse to his usual arts of policy and dissimulation, and hoped to receive intelligence of the child by feigning a desire himself to adore him. But God laughed at the folly of his short-sighted prudence, and admonished the magians not to return to him. St Joseph was likewise ordered by an angel to take the child and his mother, and to fly into Egypt. Is our Blessed Redeemer, the Lord of the universe, to be banished as soon as born! What did not he suffer! What did not his pious parents suffer on his account in so tedious and long a journey, and during a long abode in Egypt, where they were entirely strangers and destitute of all succour under the hardships of extreme poverty! It is an ancient tradition of the Greeks, mentioned by Sozomen,<sup>1</sup> St Athanasius,<sup>2</sup> and others, that at his entrance into Egypt all the idols of that kingdom fell to the ground, which literally verified the prediction of the prophet Isaiah.<sup>3</sup> Mary and Joseph were not informed by the angel how long their exile would be continued; by which we are taught to leave all to divine providence, acquiescing with confidence and simplicity in the adorable and ever holy

<sup>1</sup> Sozomen, lib. v. c. 21, p. 213, ed. Cantabr. per Reading.

<sup>2</sup> St Athan. lib. de Incarn. Verbi. Calmet, Vie de Jesus C. c. 7, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. xix. 1.

will of Him who disposes all things in infinite goodness, sanctity, and wisdom.

Herod, finding that he had been deluded by the magians, was transported with rage and anxious fears. To execute his scheme of killing the Messias, the desired of all nations and the expectation of Israel, he formed the bloody resolution of murdering all the male children in Bethlehem and the neighbouring territory which were not above two years of age. Soldiers were forthwith sent to execute these cruel orders, who, on a sudden, surrounded the town of Bethlehem and massacred all the male children in that and the adjacent towns and villages which had been born in the last two years. This more than brutish barbarity, which would almost have surpassed belief had not Herod been the contriver and ambition the incentive, was accompanied with such shrieks of mothers and children that St Matthew applies to it a prophecy of Jeremiah, which may be understood in part to relate more immediately to the Babylonish captivity, but which certainly received the most eminent completion at this time: "A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning: Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." Rama is a village not far from this town, and the sepulchre of Rachel was in a field belonging to it. The slaughter also was probably extended into the neighbouring tribe of Benjamin, which descended from Rachel. The Ethiopians in their liturgy, and the Greeks in their calendar, count fourteen thousand children massacred on this occasion; but that number exceeds all bounds, nor is it confirmed by any authority of weight. Innocent victims became the spotless Lamb of God. And how great a happiness was such a death to these glorious martyrs! They deserved to die for Christ, though they were not yet able to know or invoke his name. They were the flowers and the first fruits of his martyrs, and triumphed over the world without having ever known it or experienced its dangers. They just received the benefit of life to make a sacrifice of it to God and to purchase by it eternal life. How few perhaps of these children, if they had lived, would have escaped the dangers of the world which, by its maxims and example, bear everything down before it like an impetuous torrent! What snares, what sins, what miseries were they preserved from by this grace! With what songs of praise and love do they not to all eternity thank their Saviour, and this his infinite mercy to them! Their ignorant, foolish mothers did not know this, and therefore they wept without comfort. So we often lament as misfortunes many accidents which in the designs of heaven are the greatest mercies.

In Herod we see how blind and how cruel ambition is, which is ready to sacrifice everything, even Jesus Christ, to its views. The tyrant lived not many days longer to enjoy the kingdom which he feared so much to lose. About the time of our Lord's nativity he fell sick, and as his dis-

temper sensibly increased, despair and remorse followed him and made him insupportable both to himself and others. The innumerable crimes which he had committed were the tortures of his mind, whilst a slow imposthume, inch by inch, gnawed and consumed his bowels, feeding principally upon one of the great guts, though it extended itself over all the rest and, corroding the flesh, made a breach in the lower belly and became a sordid ulcer, out of which worms issued in swarms, and lice were also bred in his flesh. A fever violently burnt him within, though outwardly it was scarce perceptible; and he was tormented with a canine appetite which no victuals could satisfy. Such an offensive smell exhaled from his body as shocked his best friends; and uncommon twitchings and vellications upon the fibrous and membranous parts of his body, like sharp razors, cut and wounded him within; and the pain thence arising over-powered him at length with cold sweats, tremblings, and convulsions. Antipater, in his dungeon, hearing in what a lamentable condition Herod lay, strongly solicited his jailer to set him at liberty, hoping to obtain the crown; but the officer acquainted Herod with the whole affair. The tyrant, groaning under the complication of his own distempers, upon this information vented his spleen by raving and beating his own head, and, calling one of his own guards, commanded him to go that instant and cut off Antipater's head. Not content with causing many to be put to barbarous deaths during the course of his malady, he commanded the Jews that were of the principal rank and quality to be shut up in a circus at Jericho, and gave orders to his sister Salome and her husband Alexas to have them all massacred as soon as he should have expired, saying that as the Jews heartily hated him, they would rejoice at his departure; but he would make a general mourning of the whole nation at his death. This circumstance is at least related by the Jewish historian Josephus.<sup>1</sup> Herod died five days after he had put his son Antipater to death.

Parents, pastors, and tutors are bound to make it their principal care that children, in their innocent age, be by piety and charity consecrated as pure holocausts to God. This is chiefly to be done by imprinting upon their minds the strongest sentiments of devotion, and by instructing them thoroughly in their catechism. We cannot entertain too high an idea of the merit and obligation of teaching God's little ones to know him, and the great and necessary truths which he has revealed to us. Without knowing him no one can love him or acquit himself of the most indispensable duties which he owes to his Creator. Children must be instructed in prayer and the principal articles of faith as soon as they attain to the use of reason, that they may be able to give him his first fruits by faith, hope, and love, as by the law of reason and religion they are bound to do. The understanding of little children is very weak, and is able only to discover

<sup>1</sup> Jos. Ant. lib. xvii. c. 7.

small glimpses of light. Great art, experience, and earnestness are often required to manage and gradually increase these small rays, and to place therein whatever one would have the children comprehend.

The solicitude and diligence of parents and pastors to instruct others in this sacred science ought not to lessen; neither must anyone regard the function as mean or contemptible. It is the very foundation of the Christian religion. Hence Pope Paul III, in a bull in which he recommends this employment, declares that "nothing is more fruitful or more profitable for the salvation of souls." No pastoral function is more indispensable, none more beneficial, and generally none more meritorious; we may add, or more sublime. For under a meaner exterior appearance, without pomp, ostentation, or show of learning or abilities, it joins the exercise of humility with the most zealous and most profitable function of the pastoral charge. Being painful and laborious, it is, moreover, an exercise of patience and penance. Neither can anyone think it beneath his parts or dignity. The great St Austin, St Chrysostom, St Cyril, and other most learned doctors, popes, and bishops applied themselves with singular zeal and assiduity to this duty of catechizing children and all ignorant persons; this they thought a high branch of their duty, and the most useful and glorious employment of their learning and talents. What did the apostles travel over the world to do else? St Paul said, "I am a debtor to the wise and to the unwise."<sup>1</sup> We became little ones in the midst of you, as if a nurse would cherish her children; so desirous of you, that we would gladly have imparted to you not only the gospel of God, but even our own souls."<sup>2</sup> Our Divine Lord himself made this the principal employment of his ministry. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me: he hath sent me to preach the gospel to the poor."<sup>3</sup> He declared the pleasure he found in assisting that innocent age when he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, for the kingdom of God is for such. And embracing them, and laying his hands upon them, he blessed them."<sup>4</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 28:*

THE HOLY INNOCENTS (Matt. vi. 16); the Ethiopians in their liturgy and the Greeks in their calendar count fourteen thousand children massacred by the impious King Herod in his attempt to kill the Child Jesus, whom the Wise Men sought as a future king: ST THEODOCUS, Confessor.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Luke iv. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Mark x. 14, 16.

DECEMBER 29

ST THOMAS A BECKET, OR BECKET, ARCHBISHOP OF  
CANTERBURY, MARTYR

(A.D. 1170)

[See his life by John of Salisbury, his chaplain, who attended him during most part of his exile and was present at his death. He died Bishop of Chartres, and his learning and integrity are much extolled by Cave, Hist. Liter. t. ii. p. 243.]

ST THOMAS BECKET was born in London in 1117, on the 21st of December. His father, Gilbert Becket, was a gentleman of middling fortune who, in his youth, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem with divers others, and falling into the hands of the Saracens, remained a year and a half a prisoner, or rather a slave, to one of their emirs or admirals. An only daughter of this emir, hearing him one day explain the Christian faith and declare, upon the question being put to him, that he should with the greatest joy lay down his life for the love of God if he was made worthy of such a happiness, was so touched as to conceive on the spot the desire of becoming a Christian. This she made known to Becket, who contented himself with telling her that she would be very happy if God gave her that grace, though it were attended with the loss of everything this world could afford. He and his fellow-slaves soon after made their escape in the night-time and returned safe to London. The young Syrian lady privately left her father's house and followed him thither, and being instructed in the faith and baptized by the name of Maud or Mathildes, she was married to him in St Paul's Church by the Bishop of London. Soon after Gilbert went back into the East to join the crusade or holy war, and remained in those parts three years and a half. Maud was brought to bed of our saint a little time after his departure, about a twelvemonth after their marriage, and being herself very pious, she taught her son from his infancy to fear God and inspired him with a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin. His father, after his return to England, was, in his turn, sheriff<sup>1</sup> of London. Fitz-Stephens assures us that he never put money out at interest, and never embarked in any commerce, but, being contented with his patrimony, lived on the annual income. His death, in 1138, left our saint exposed to the dangers of the world at an age when the greatest mistakes in life are frequently committed. But he had been educated in habits of temperance, obedience, and self-denial, and was so thoroughly grounded in the maxims of the gospel as to stand firmly upon his guard and to do nothing but by good advice. His father had placed him in his childhood in a monastery of canon regulars, and after his death Thomas continued his studies in London, where Fitz-Stephens informs us there were then three very great

schools belonging to the three principal churches, in which public declamations were made, and frequent literary disputations held with great emulation between both masters and scholars. Here Thomas pursued his studies till the age of twenty-one years when, having lost his mother, he discontinued them for a year: but considering the dangers which surrounded him while unemployed, he resolved to reassume them. He therefore went first to Oxford, and shortly after to Paris where he applied himself diligently to the canon law and various other branches of literature. When he came back to London, he was first made clerk or secretary to the court of the city, and distinguished himself by his capacity in public affairs. He was afterwards taken into the family of a certain young nobleman in the country, who was extremely fond of hunting and hawking. In this situation Thomas began to be carried away with the love of these diversions, which were become his only business; so that by this company he grew more remiss in the service of God. An awakening accident opened his eyes. One day, when he was eager in the pursuit of game, his hawk made a stoop at a duck, and dived after it into a river. Thomas, apprehensive of losing his hawk, leaped into the water, and the stream being rapid carried him down to a mill, and he was saved only by the sudden stopping of the wheel, which appeared miraculous. Thomas, in gratitude to God his deliverer, resolved to betake himself to a more serious course of life and returned to London. His virtue and abilities gave him a great reputation; and nothing can sooner gain a man the confidence of others as that inflexible integrity and veracity which always formed the character of our saint. Even in his childhood he always chose rather to suffer any blame, disgrace, or punishment than to tell an untruth; and in his whole life he was never found guilty of a lie in the smallest matter.

A strict intimacy had intervened betwixt Theobald, who was advanced to the archbishopric of Canterbury in 1138, and our saint's father, they being both originally from the same part of Normandy, about the village of Tierrie. Some persons, therefore, having recommended Thomas to that prelate, he was invited to accept of some post in his family. Attended only with one squire, named Ralph of London, he joined the archbishop, who then was at the village of Harwe, or Harrow. Thomas was tall of stature, his countenance was beautiful and pleasing, his senses quick and lively, and his discourse very agreeable. Having taken orders a little before this, he was presented by the Bishop of Worcester to the Church of Shoreham,<sup>1</sup> afterwards by the abbot of St Alban's to that of Bratfield.<sup>2</sup> With the leave of the archbishop he went to Italy, and there studied the canon law a year at Bologna; then some time at Auxerre. After his return the archbishop ordained him deacon, and he was successively preferred to the provostship of Beverley, and to canonries at Lincoln and St Paul's in

<sup>1</sup> Fitz-Stephens, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Chron. de Walden, MSS. Cotton. Titus. D. 20.

London; the archbishop nominated him Archdeacon of Canterbury, which was then looked upon as the first ecclesiastical dignity in England after the abbacies and bishoprics, which gave a seat in the house of lords.<sup>1</sup> The archbishop committed to our saint the management of the most intricate affairs, seldom did anything without his advice, sent him several times to Rome on important errands, and never had reason to repent of the choice he had made or of the confidence he reposed in him. Theobald, who had before made him his archdeacon, and by a long experience had found him proof against all the temptations of the world, and endued with a prudence capable of all manner of affairs, recommended him to the high office of Lord-chancellor of England, to which King Henry, who had ascended the throne on the 20th of December 1154, readily exalted him in 1157. The saint's sweetness of temper, joined with his integrity and other amiable qualities, gained him the esteem and affection of everyone, especially of his prince, who took great pleasure in his conversation, often went to dine with him, and committed to his care the education of his son, Prince Henry, to be formed by him in sound maxims of honour and virtue. He sent him also into France to negotiate a treaty with that crown, and conclude a marriage between his son Henry and Margaret, daughter to Lewis the Younger, King of France, in both which commissions he succeeded to his master's desires. Amidst the honours and prosperity which he enjoyed, he always lived most humble, modest, mortified, recollected, compassionate, charitable to the poor without bounds, and perfectly chaste; and triumphed over all the snares which wicked courtiers, and sometimes the king himself, laid for his virtue, especially his chastity. The persecutions which envy and jealousy raised against him he overcame by meekness and silence.

Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, died in 1160. King Henry was then in Normandy with his chancellor, whom he immediately resolved to raise to that dignity. Some time after he bade him prepare himself to go to England for an affair of importance, and in taking leave explained his intentions to him. Thomas, after alleging many excuses, flatly told the king: "Should God permit me to be Archbishop of Canterbury I should soon lose your Majesty's favour, and the great affection with which you honour me would be changed into hatred. For your majesty will be pleased to suffer me to tell you that several things you do in prejudice of the inviolable rights of the church make me fear you would require of me what I could not agree to; and envious persons would not fail to make this pass for a crime in order to make me lose your favour." Such was the generous liberty of this man of God and his serious desire to deliver himself from the dangers which threatened him. The king paid no regard to his remonstrances, and sent over certain noblemen into England to manage the affairs with the clergy of the kingdom and the chapter of

<sup>1</sup> Fitz-Stephens, p. 12.

Canterbury, ordering them to labour with the same ardour to place the chancellor in the see of Canterbury as they would to set the crown on his son's head. St Thomas obeyed in going for England, but refused to acquiesce in accepting the dignity till the Cardinal of Pisa, legate from the holy see in England, overruled all his scruples by the weight of his authority. The election was made on the eve of Whitsunday in 1162; a synod of bishops at London ratified the same, and the prince, then in London, gave his consent in his father's name, and the saint set out immediately from London to Canterbury. On the road he gave a private charge to one of the clergy of his church to advertise him of all the faults which he should observe in his conduct; for even an enemy, by his reproaches, is often more useful to us than a flattering friend. The archbishop, soon after his consecration, received the pallium from Pope Alexander III, which John of Salisbury brought him from Rome. He had hitherto employed all his time in prayer to beg the light of heaven, and from that time began to exert himself in the discharge of his pastoral duties. Next his skin he always wore a hair shirt; over this he put on the habit of a Benedictin monk from the time he was made archbishop; and over this the habit of a canon, of very light stuff. By the rule of life which he laid down for his private conduct, he rose at two o'clock in the morning, and after matins washed the feet of thirteen poor persons, to each of whom he distributed money. It was most edifying to see him, with profound humility, melting in tears at their feet and begging the assistance of their prayers. At the hour of prime, his almoner washed the feet of twelve others and gave them bread and meat. The archbishop returned to take a little rest after matins, and washing the feet of the first company of poor persons, but rose again very early to pray and to read the holy scriptures, which he did assiduously and with the most profound respect. He found in them such unction that he had them always in his hands even when he walked, and desired holy solitude that he might bury himself in them. He kept always a learned person with him to interpret to him these sacred oracles, whom he consulted on the meaning of difficult passages; so much did he fear to rely on his own lights by presumption, though others admired his wisdom and learning. After his morning meditation he visited those that were sick among his monks and clergy; at nine o'clock he said mass, or heard one, if out of respect and humility he did not celebrate himself. He often wept at the divine mysteries. At ten a third daily alms was distributed, in all to one hundred persons; and the saint doubled all the ordinary alms of his predecessor. He dined at three o'clock and took care that some pious book was read at table. He never had dishes of high price, yet kept a table decently served for the sake of others; but was himself very temperate and mortified. One day a monk saw him in company eat the wing of a pheasant, and was scandalized, like the Pharisee, saying he thought him

a more mortified man. The archbishop meekly answered him that gluttony might be committed in the grossest food, and that the best might be taken without it and with indifference. After dinner he conversed a little with some pious and learned clergymen on pious subjects or on their functions. He was most rigorous in the examination of persons who were presented to holy orders and seldom relied upon any others in it. Such was the order he had established in his house that no one in it durst ever receive any present. He regarded all the poor as his children, and his revenues seemed more properly theirs than his own. He reprehended with freedom the vices of the great ones, and recovered out of the hands of several powerful men lands of his church which had been usurped by them, in which the king was his friend and protector. He assisted at the council of Tours, assembled by Pope Alexander III, in 1163. He obliged the king to fill the two sees of Worcester and Hereford, which he had long held in his hands, with worthy prelates whom the saint consecrated.

The devil, envying the advantage which accrued to the church from the good harmony which reigned between the king and the archbishop, laboured to sow the seeds of discord between them. St Thomas first offended his majesty by resigning the office of chancellor which, out of complaisance to him, he had kept some time after he was nominated archbishop. But the source of all this mischief was an abuse by which the king usurped the revenues of the vacant sees and other benefices, and deferred a long time to fill them that he might the longer enjoy the temporalities, as some of his predecessors had sacrilegiously done before him: which injustice St Thomas would by no means tolerate. A third debate was, that the archbishop would not allow lay judges to summon ecclesiastical persons before their tribunals. By the zeal with which he curbed the officers or noblemen who oppressed the church or its lands, compelling them to restore some which they had unjustly usurped, or which had been given them by former incumbents or bishops who had no right to bestow them, at least beyond the term of their own lives, he exasperated several courtiers, who began first to misrepresent his conduct herein to the king. The king, however, still showed him the greatest marks of favour and seemed still to love him, as he had done from the first acquaintance, above all men living. The first sign of displeasure happened at Woodstock, when the king was holding his court there with the principal nobility. It was customary to pay two shillings a year upon every hide of land to the king's officers, who in place of the sheriffs were employed to maintain the public peace in every county. This sum the king ordered to be paid into his exchequer. The archbishop made a modest remonstrance that, without being wanting in respect to his majesty, this might not be exacted as a revenue of the crown, adding, "If the sheriffs, their serjeants, or the officers of the provinces defend the people, we shall not be wanting to

relieve and succour them" (viz., either with pecuniary supplies and recompenses, and affording them assistance by the constables and other civil peace-officers). The king replied with warmth, making use of a familiar impious oath, "By God's eyes, this shall be paid as a revenue, or those who do not pay it shall be prosecuted by a writ of the royal exchequer." The archbishop answered that none of his vassals would pay it, nor any of the clergy. The king said no more at that time, but his resentment was the greater.

Soon after, he told the archbishop and bishops that he would require of them an oath that they would maintain all the customs of the kingdom. St Thomas understood that certain notorious abuses and injustices were called by the king "customs." He therefore, in a general meeting of the bishops at Westminster, refused that oath, unless he might add this clause, "As far as was lawful, or consistent with duty." The Archbishop of York and the Bishops of Chichester and Lincoln were drawn from their first resolution against it, and St Thomas, who had resisted the threats of the king, was overcome by the tears of the clergy, and complied in an assembly at the king's palace at Clarendon in 1164. He soon after repented of his condescension, and remained in silence and tears till he had consulted the pope, who was then at Sens, and begged his absolution. His holiness, in his answer, gave him the desired absolution from censures, advised him to abstain no longer from approaching the altar, and exhorted him to repair by an episcopal vigour the fault into which he had only been betrayed through surprise. The king was extremely offended at the repentance of the archbishop, and threatened his life; but the prelate boldly said he never would authorize as custom the notorious oppressions of the church which his predecessors, especially St Anselm, had zealously condemned before him. The king, in an assembly of the bishops and nobility at Northampton on the 8th of October 1164, pronounced sentence against him, by which he declared all his goods confiscated. Several bishops and others endeavoured to persuade him to resign his archbishopric. But he answered with great resolution that to do it in such circumstances would be to betray the truth and the cause of the church, by which he was bound, by the place which he held, rather to lay down his life. His persecutions daily increasing, he gave strict charge to his domestics and friends to remain in silence, peace, and charity toward their enemies, to bear injuries with patience, and never to conceive the least sentiment of rancour against anyone. His cause in the meantime was evoked to the holy see, according to his appeal in the council, and he resolved privately to leave the kingdom. He landed in Flanders in 1164 and, arriving at the abbey of St Bertin's, at St Omer, sent from thence deputies to Lewis VII, King of France, who received them graciously, and invited the archbishop into his dominions. King Henry forbade any to send him any manner of assistance. The pope

was then at Sens, in France. The bishops and other deputies from the King of England arrived there, gained several of the cardinals, and in a public audience accused St Thomas before his holiness; yet taking notice that he acquitted himself of his office with great prudence and virtue, and governed his church truly like a worthy prelate. St Thomas left St Bertin's after a few days' stay and, being accompanied by the Bishop of Triers and the abbot of St Bertin's, went to Soissons. The King of France happened to come thither the next day, and he no sooner heard that the Archbishop of Canterbury was there but he went to his lodgings to testify his veneration for his person, and obliged him to accept from him all the money he should want during his exile. The saint pursued his journey to Sens, where he met with a cold reception from the cardinals. When he had audience of the pope, he expressed his grief at the disturbances in England and his desire to procure a true peace to that church, for which end he professed himself ready to lay down his life with joy: but then he exaggerated the evils of a false peace, and gave in a copy of the articles which the King of England required him to sign and which he said tended to the entire oppression of the church. His justification was so moving, so full, and so modest that the cardinals expressed their approbation of his conduct, and the pope encouraged him to constancy with great tenderness. In a second audience, on the day following, the archbishop confessed, with extreme humility, that he had entered the see, though against his will, yet against the canons, in passing so suddenly from the state of a layman into it, and that he had acquitted himself so ill of his obligations in it as to have had no more than the name of a pastor; wherefore he resigned his dignity into the hands of his holiness and, taking the ring off his finger, delivered it to him and withdrew. After a long deliberation the pope called him again and, commanding his zeal, reinstated him in his dignity with an order not to abandon it, for that would be visibly to abandon the cause of God. Then sending for the abbot of Pontigni, his holiness recommended this exiled prelate to that superior of the poor of Jesus Christ to be entertained by him like one of them. He exhorted the archbishop to pray for the spirit of courage and constancy.

St Thomas regarded this austere monastery of the Cistercian Order not as an exile but as a delightful religious retreat and a school of penance for the expiation of his sins. Not content with the hair shirt which he constantly wore, he used frequent disciplines and other austerities, submitted himself to all the rules of the Order, wore the habit, and embraced with joy the most abject functions and humiliations. He was unwilling to suffer any distinction, and would put by the meats prepared for him and seasoned, that he might take only the portion of the community, and that the driest and without seasoning or sauce. But this he did with address, that it might not be perceived. King Henry vented his passion against both

the pope and the archbishop, confiscated the goods of all the friends, relations, and domestics of the holy prelate, banished them his dominions, not sparing even infants at the breast, lying-in women, and old men; and obliged by oath all who had attained the age of discretion to go to the archbishop that the sight of them and their tears might move him. This oath they were obliged to take at Lambeth before Ralph de Brock, whom Fitz-Stephens calls one of the most daring and profligate of men; yet into his hands the king had delivered the temporalities of the archbishopric to be kept, that is, says this author, to be laid waste and destroyed. These exiles arrived in troops at Pontigni, and the prelate could not contain his tears. Providence, however, provided for them all by the charities of many prelates and princes. The Queen of Sicily and the Archbishop of Syracuse invited many over thither, and most liberally furnished them with necessities. The pope and others laboured to bring the king to a reconciliation; but that prince threatened his holiness and committed daily greater excesses, by threatening letters to the general chapter of Citeaux, that he would abolish their Order in England if they continued to harbour his enemy. Whereupon the saint left Pontigni; but a little before this he was favoured with a revelation of his martyrdom. Whilst he lay prostrate before the altar in prayers and tears, he heard a voice saying distinctly, "Thomas, Thomas, my church shall be glorified in thy blood." The saint asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" and the same voice answered, "I am Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, thy brother." He wept in taking leave of the monks at Pontigni. The abbot thought his tears the effect of natural tenderness; but the saint called him aside and, bidding him not discover it before his death, told him he wept for those who had followed him, who would be scattered like sheep without a pastor; for God had shown to him, the night before, that he should be slain by four men in his church, whom he saw enter it, and take off the top part of his head. The King of France sent him the most affectionate assurances of his protection and respect, and, rejoicing to be able to serve Jesus Christ in the person of his exiled servant, gave orders with a royal magnificence that he should be entertained at his expense at Sens. St Thomas was received there with all possible joy and respect by the archbishop, and retired to the monastery of St Columba, situate half a mile from the city. He excommunicated all those who should obey the late orders of the King of England in seizing the estates of the church, and threatened that prince himself, but mildly, and with strong exhortations to repentance. The king, by his deputies, gained again many cardinals at Rome, and surprised the pope himself, who began to speak in his favour, and named two legates *à Lettre* who were devoted to him; which drew complaints from the archbishop. The saint, according to summons, met the legates at Gisors, on the frontier of France and Normandy; but finding that one of them, the Cardinal of

Pavia, was artfully studying to betray him, wrote to the pope. Cardinal Otho, the other legate, represented to the king his obligation of restoring to the church his unjust usurpations and revenues of the see of Canterbury, which he had received; but his majesty answered he had no scruple of that, having employed them on the church or on the poor. But the legate said he could not answer it at the tribunal of Christ. The King of France, at the request of his holiness, undertook to be a mediator between the King of England and the archbishop. The two kings had a conference together near Gisors. St Thomas fell at the feet of his sovereign and was raised by him. King Henry, among many fair speeches, said he desired no more than the rights which former holy archbishops had not contested. The King of France said nothing more could be desired; but the archbishop showed abuses were meant, which former archbishops had opposed though they had not been able to extirpate them. If they tolerated some out of necessity, they did not approve them, which was demanded of him. The King of France thought him too inflexible, and the nobles of both kingdoms accused him of pride. The saint was insulted and forsaken by all, and set out for Sens, expecting to be also banished France. But the King of France soon after, reflecting on what he had done, sent for the servant of God, fell at his feet with many tears, begging his pardon and absolution of his sin, and confessing that he alone had understood the artifices which were made use of. The archbishop gave him absolution and his blessing, and returned to Sens. The pope sent two new legates, Gratian and Vivian, to King Henry, and after two others; but that prince refused always to promise the restitution of the church revenues and the like articles. St Thomas never ceased to pray, fast, and weep for the evils of his church. No prelate had ever stronger temptations to struggle with; and certainly nothing but conscience and the most steady virtue could ever have obliged him to have renounced his own interests, and the favour of so great a king, whom he most affectionately loved, for whose service in his wars he furnished more troops at his own expense than could have been thought possible, and to whom he always remained most loyal and most faithful. King Henry, among other injuries done to the good prelate, caused his son to be crowned king by the Archbishop of York, in the very diocese of Canterbury, himself waiting upon him at supper, and obliged his subjects, even by torments, to renounce the obedience not only of the archbishop, but also of the pope. But it pleased God on a sudden to change his heart and inspire him with a desire of a reconciliation. The Archbishop of Sens conducted St Thomas to his majesty, who received him with all the marks of his former esteem and affection, and with tears desired that all their differences might be buried in oblivion, and that they might live in perfect friendship. Nor did he make the least mention of the pretended customs which had been the occasion of these disturbances.

The Archbishop of York, a man whose life rendered him unworthy of that character, and the bishops of London and Salisbury, mortal enemies to the saint, began again to alienate the king from him by renewing in his breast former jealousies. The archbishop waited on his majesty at Tours, but could obtain no more than a promise of the restitution of his lands when he should be arrived in England. In the meantime he gave leave to the officers of the Archbishop of York to plunder all the goods of his church, and the harvest of that year. Nevertheless, the archbishop having been seven years absent, resolved to return to his church, though expecting to meet the crown of martyrdom. Writing to the king, he closed his letter as follows: "With your majesty's leave I return to my church, perhaps to die there, and to hinder at least by my death its entire destruction. Your majesty is able yet to make me feel the effects of your clemency and religion. But whether I live or die, I will always preserve inviolably that charity which I bear you in our Lord. And whatever may happen to me, I pray God to heap all his graces and good gifts on your majesty and on your children." The holy archbishop prepared himself for his journey with a heart filled with the love of the Cross of Christ, and breathing nothing but the sacrifice of himself in his cause. Many French noblemen furnished him with money and all necessaries. That he might thank the King of France, he went to Paris and lodged in the abbey of canon regulars of St Victor, where one of his hair shirts is still preserved. On the octave of St Austin, their patron, he was desired to preach, and made an excellent sermon on those words, "And his dwelling was made in peace."<sup>1</sup> In taking leave of the French king, he said, "I am going to seek my death in England." His majesty answered, "So I believe"; and pressed him to stay in his dominions, promising that nothing should be wanting to him there. The saint said, "The will of God must be accomplished." He sent over to England the sentence of suspension and interdict which the pope had pronounced against the Archbishop of York and his accomplices in several unwarrantable proceedings, and excommunication against Renald of Broke and certain others. The saint embarked at Witsan, near Calais, but landed at Sandwich, where he was received with incredible acclamations of joy. He had escaped several ambuscades of his enemies on the road. The Archbishop of York demanded absolution from his censures in a threatening manner; St Thomas meekly offered it on condition the other, according to the custom of the church, would swear to submit to the conditions which should be enjoined him. The other refused to do this, and went over to Normandy with the bishops of London and Salisbury to accuse the archbishop to the king, in doing which passion made slander pass for truth. The king, in a transport of fury, cried out, and repeated several times, that "He cursed all those whom he had honoured with his

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxv.

friendship and enriched by his bounty, seeing none of them had the courage to rid him of one bishop, who gave him more trouble than all the rest of his subjects." Four young gentlemen in his service, who had no other religion than to flatter their prince, viz., Sir William Tracy, Sir Hugh Morville, Sir Richard Briton, and Sir Reginald Fitz-Orson, conspired privately together to murder him.

The archbishop was received in London with exceeding great triumph: but the young king sent him an order to confine himself to the city of Canterbury. The saint alleged that he was obliged to make the visitation of his diocese. On Christmas-day, after mass, he preached his last sermon to his flock. In the end he declared that he should shortly leave them, and that the time of his death was at hand. All wept bitterly at this news, and the saint, seeing their tears, could not entirely contain his own: but he comforted himself with motives of holy faith, and stood some time absorbed in God, in the sweet contemplation of his adorable will. The four assassins being landed in England, were joined by Renald of Broke, who brought with him a troop of armed men. They went the next day to Canterbury, and insolently upbraiding the archbishop with treason, threatened him with death unless he absolved all those who were interdicted or excommunicated. The saint answered, it was the pope who had pronounced those censures, that the king had agreed to it, and promised his assistance therein before five hundred witnesses, among whom some of them were present, and that they ought to promise satisfaction for their crimes before an absolution. They, in a threatening manner, gave a charge to his ecclesiastics that were present to watch him, that he might not escape: for the king would make him an example of justice. The saint said, "Do you imagine that I think of flying: no, no; I wait for the stroke of death without fear." Then showing with his hand that part of his head where God had given him to understand he should be struck, he said, "It is here, it is here that I expect you!" The assassins went back, put on their bucklers and arms, as if they were going to a battle, and taking with them the other armed men, returned to the archbishop, who was then gone to the church, for it was the hour of vespers. He had forbidden in virtue of obedience any to barricade the doors, saying the church was not to be made a citadel. The murderers entered, sword in hand, crying out, "Where is the traitor?" No one answered, till another cried, "Where is the archbishop?" The saint then advanced toward them, saying, "Here I am, the archbishop, but no traitor." All the monks and ecclesiastics ran to hide themselves or to hold the altars, except three, who stayed by his side. The archbishop appeared without the least commotion or fear. One of the ruffians said to him, "Now you must diel!" He answered, "I am ready to die for God, for justice, and for the liberty of his church. But I forbid you, in the name of the Almighty

God, to hurt in the least any of my religious clergy or people. I have defended the church as far as I was able during my life, when I saw it oppressed, and I shall be happy if, by my death at least, I can restore its peace and liberty." He then fell on his knees and spoke these his last words, "I recommend my soul and the cause of the church to God, to the Blessed Virgin, to the holy patrons of this place, to the martyrs St Dionysius and St Elphege of Canterbury." He then prayed for his murderers, and bowing a little his head presented it to them in silence. They first offered to bring him out of the church, but he said, "I will not stir; do here what you please, or are commanded." The fear lest the people who crowded into the church should hinder them made them hasten the execution of their design. Tracy struck at his head first with his sword; but an ecclesiastic who stood by, named Edward Grim or Grimfer (who afterwards wrote his life), held out his arm, which was almost cut off; but this broke the blow on the archbishop, who was only a little stunned with it, and he held up his head with his two hands as immovable as before, ardently offering himself to God. Two others immediately gave him together two violent strokes, by which he fell on the pavement, near the altar of St Bennet, and was now expiring, when the fourth, Richard Briton, ashamed not to have dipped his sword in blood, cut off the top part of his head and broke his sword against the pavement; then Hugh of Horsea inhumanly, with the point of his sword, drew out all his brains and scattered them on the floor.<sup>1</sup> After this sacrilege, they went and rifled the archiepiscopal palace with a fury which passion had heightened to madness. The city was filled with consternation, tears, and lamentations. A blind man recovered his sight by applying his eyes to the blood of the martyr yet warm. The canons shut the doors of the church, watched by the corpse all night, and interred it privately the next morning because of a report that the murderers designed to drag it through the street. St Thomas was martyred on the 29th of December, in the year 1170, the fifty-third of his age and the ninth of his episcopacy.

The grief of all Catholic princes and of all Christendom at the news of this sacrilege is not to be expressed. King Henry, above all others, at the first news of it, forgot not only his animosity against the saint, but even the dignity of his crown, to abandon himself to the humiliation and affliction of a penitent who bewailed his sins in sackcloth and ashes. He shut himself up for three days in his closet, taking almost no nourishment and admitting no comfort: and for forty days never went abroad, never had his table or any diversions as usual, having always before his eyes the death of the holy prelate. He not only wept, but howled and cried out in the excess of his grief. He sent deputies to the pope to assure him that he had neither commanded nor intended that execrable murder. His

<sup>1</sup> *Bened. Abbas in vita Henry II, t. i. p. 2.*

holiness excommunicated the assassins, and sent two legates to the king into Normandy, who found him in the most edifying dispositions of a sincere penitent. His majesty swore to them that he abolished the pretended customs and the abuses which had excited the zeal of the saint, and restored all the church lands and revenues which he had usurped; and was ordered for his penance to maintain two hundred soldiers in the holy war for a year. This miraculous conversion of the king and restitution of the liberties of the church was looked upon as the effect of the saint's prayers and blood. Seven lepers were cleansed; the blind, the deaf, the dumb, and others sick of all kinds of distempers were cured by his intercession, and some dead restored to life. Pope Alexander III published the bull of his canonization in 1173. Philip, afterwards surnamed Augustus, son to Lewis VII of France, being very sick and despaired of by the physicians, the king his father spent the days and nights in tears, refusing all comfort. He was advertised at length three nights in his sleep by St Thomas, whom he had known, to make a pilgrimage to his shrine at Canterbury. He set out against the advice of his nobility, who were apprehensive of dangers: he was met by King Henry at the entrance of his dominions and conducted by him to the tomb of the martyr. After his prayer, he bestowed on the church a gold cup and several presents on the monks, with great privileges. Upon his return into France he found his son perfectly recovered through the merits of St Thomas, in 1179.

God was pleased to chastise King Henry as he had done David. His son, the young king, rebelled, because his father refused the cession of any part of his dominions to him during his own life. He was supported by the greatest part of the English nobility and by the king of Scotland, who committed the most unheard of cruelties in the northern provinces, which he laid waste. The old king, in his abandoned condition, made a pilgrimage to the shrine of St Thomas, walked barefoot three miles before the town, over the pebbles and stones, so that his feet were all bloody, and at the tomb his tears and sighs were the only voice of his contrite and humbled heart before God. He would receive a stroke of a discipline from all the bishops, priests, and canons, and spent there that whole day and the night following without taking any nourishment, and made great presents to the church. The next morning, whilst he was hearing mass near the tomb, the King of Scotland, his most cruel enemy, was taken prisoner by a small number of men. Soon after, his son threw himself at his feet and obtained pardon. He indeed revolted again several times; but, falling sick, by the merits of St Thomas, deserved to die a true penitent. He made a public confession of his sins, put on sackcloth, and a cord about his neck, and would be dragged by it out of bed as the most unworthy of sinners, and laid on ashes, on which he received the viaticum, and died in the most perfect sentiments of repentance. As to the four murderers,

they retired to Cnaresburg, a house belonging to one of them, namely, Hugh of Morville, in the west of England, where, shunned by all men and distrusted with the remorse of their own conscience, they lived alone without so much as a servant that would attend them. Some time after, they travelled into Italy to receive absolution from the pope. His holiness enjoined them a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where three of them shut themselves up in a place called Montenigro, as in a prison of penance, as the pope had ordered them, and lived and died true penitents. They were buried before the gate of the Church of Jerusalem, with this epitaph: "Here lie the wretches who martyred blessed Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury." The other, who had given the first wound, deferred a little to commence his penance, and stopping at Cosenza, in Calabria, there died of a miserable distemper in which his flesh rotted from his body and fell to pieces. He never ceased to implore with sighs and tears the intercession of St Thomas, as the bishop of that city, who heard his confession, testified. All the four murderers died within three years after the martyrdom of the saint.

The body of the martyr was first buried in the lower part of the church: but shortly after taken up and laid in a sumptuous shrine in the east end. So great were the offerings thereat that the church all round about it abounded with more than princely riches, the meanest part of which was pure gold, garnished with many precious stones, as William Lambarde<sup>1</sup> and Weever<sup>2</sup> assure us. The largest of these was the royal diamond given by Lewis, King of France. The marble stones before the place remain to this day, very much worn and hollowed by the knees of the pilgrims who prayed there. His hair shirt is shown in a reliquary in the English college at Douay; a small part in the abbey of Liesse; a bone of his arm in the great church of St Waldegrave at Mons;<sup>3</sup> his chalice in the great nunnery at Bourbourg; his mitre, and linen dipped in his blood, at St Bertin's, at St Omer; vestments in many other monasteries, &c., in the Low Countries, &c.<sup>4</sup>

Zeal for the glory of God is the first property, or rather the spirit and perfection, of his holy love, and ought to be the peculiar virtue of every Christian, especially of every pastor of the church. How is God delighted to shower down his heavenly graces on those who are zealous for his honour! How will he glorify them in heaven, as on this account he glorified Phinehas even on earth.<sup>5</sup> What zeal for his Father's glory did not Christ exert on

<sup>1</sup> Lambarde, in his *Perambulation of Kent*, anno 1565.

<sup>2</sup> Weever's *Funeral Monuments*, p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> Brasseur, *Thes. Reliquiarium Hannoniae*, p. 199.

<sup>4</sup> The martyr's body is stated to have been destroyed by the order or sanction of Henry VIII, September 1538, but in 1888 a skeleton believed to be that of St Thomas was discovered in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral, but the absence of evidence beyond a fracture in the skull makes the matter very doubtful.

<sup>5</sup> Numb. xxv.

earth! How did this holy fire burn in the breasts of the apostles and of all the saints! but in the exercise of zeal itself how many snares are to be feared! and how many Christians deceive themselves! Self-love is subtle in seducing those who do not know themselves. Humour, pride, avarice, caprice, and passion frequently are passed for zeal. But the true conditions of this virtue are, that it be prudent, disinterested, and intrepid. It is a mistake to place holy zeal in an impetuous ardour of the soul, which can be no other than the result of passion. Secondly, it must be disinterested or pure in its motive, free from all mixture of avarice, pride, vanity, resentment, or any passion. Thirdly, it must be intrepid. The fear of God makes his servant no longer fear men. John the Baptist feared not the tyrant who persecuted him; but Herod stood in awe of the humble preacher.<sup>1</sup> The servant of God is not anxious about his own life; but is solicitous that God be honoured. All that he can suffer for this end he looks upon as a recompense. Fatigues, contempt, torments, or death he embraces with joy. By his constancy and fidelity he conquers and subdues the whole world. In afflictions and disgraces his virtue makes him magnanimous. It accompanies him in all places and in every situation. By this he is great not only in adversity, being through it firm under persecutions and constant in torments, but also in riches, grandeur, and prosperity, amidst which it inspires him with humility, moderation, and holy fear, and animates all his actions and designs with religion and divine charity.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 29:*

St EVROUL, Abbot, in the sixth century: St MARCELLUS, Abbot, in the fifth age: St THOMAS OF CANTERBURY (Thomas à Becket), Archbishop of Canterbury, martyred 1170: and The VENERABLE WILLIAM HOWARD, Viscount Stafford, English martyr.

### DECEMBER 30

## ST SABINUS, BISHOP OF ASSIUM, AND HIS COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

(A.D. 304)

[Abridged from their acts in Baluze and Baronius.]

THE cruel edicts of Diocletian and Maximian against the Christians, being published in the year 303, Sabinus, Bishop of Assisium, and several of his clergy were apprehended and kept in custody till Venustianus, the governor of Etruria and Umbria, came thither. Upon his arrival in that city he caused the hands of Sabinus, who had made a glorious confession of his faith before him, to be cut off; and his two deacons, Marcellus and Exuperantius, to be scourged, beaten with clubs, and torn with iron nails or broad tenters, under which torments they both expired. Sabinus is

<sup>1</sup> Mark vi.

said to have cured a blind boy, and a weakness in the eyes of Venustianus himself, who was thereupon converted and afterwards beheaded for the faith. Lucius, his successor, commanded Sabinus to be beaten to death with clubs at Spoleto. The martyr was buried a mile from that city; but his relics have been since translated to Faenza. St Gregory the Great<sup>1</sup> speaks of a chapel built in his honour near Fermo, in which he placed some of his relics which he had obtained from Chrysanthus, Bishop of Spoleto. These martyrs are mentioned on this day in Ado, Usuard, and the Roman Martyrology.

How powerfully do the martyrs cry out to us by their example, exhorting us to despise a false and wicked world! What have all the philosophers and princes found by all their researches and efforts in quest of happiness in it? They only fell from one precipice into another. Departing from its true centre, they sought it in every other object, but in their pursuits only wandered further and further from it. A soul can find no rest in creatures. How long then shall we suffer ourselves to be seduced in their favour? be always deceived, yet always ready to deceive ourselves again? How long shall we give false names to objects round about us, and imagine a virtue in them which they have not? Is not the experience of near six thousand years enough to undeceive us? Let the light of heaven, the truths of the gospel, shine upon us, and the illusions of the world and our senses will disappear. But were the goods and evils of the world real, they can have no weight if they are compared with eternity. They are contemptible, because transient and momentary. In this light the martyrs viewed them.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 30:*

ST MAXIMUS, martyred in the seventh century: ST SABINUS, Bishop of Assisium, AND HIS COMPANIONS; these included two deacons, named MARCELLUS and EXUPERANTIUS, and VENUSTIANUS, Governor of Etruria, whom Sabinus had cured of a weakness of the eyes.

### DECEMBER 31

#### ST SYLVESTER, POPE, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 335)

[See the Pontifical, published by Anastasius, Rufin, &c. Amongst the moderns, Tillemont, t. vii. p. 267; Orsi, t. iv. and v.]

ST SYLVESTER, whom God appointed to govern his holy church in the first years of her temporal prosperity and triumph over her persecuting enemies, was a native of Rome and son to Rufinus and Justa. According to the general rule with those who are saints from their cradle, he received early and in his infancy the strongest sentiments of Christian piety from

<sup>1</sup> Lib. vii. Ep. 72, 73. lib. xi. Ep. 20

the example, instructions, and care of a virtuous mother, who for his education in the sound maxims and practice of religion, and in sacred literature, put him young into the hands of Charitius, or Carinus, a priest of an unexceptionable character and great abilities. Being formed under an excellent master, he entered among the clergy of Rome and was ordained priest by Pope Marcellinus, before the peace of the church was disturbed by Diocletian and his associate in the empire. His behaviour in those turbulent and dangerous times recommended him to the public esteem, and he saw the triumph of the cross by the victory which Constantine gained over Maxentius within sight of the city of Rome, on the 28th of October 312. Pope Melchiades dying in January 314, St Sylvester was exalted to the pontificate, and the same year commissioned four legates, two priests, and two deacons to represent him at the great council of the Western church, held at Arles in August, in which the schism of the Donatists, which had then subsisted seven years, and the heresy of the Quartodecimans were condemned, and many important points of discipline regulated in twenty-two canons. These decisions were sent by the council before it broke up, with an honourable letter, to Pope Sylvester, and were confirmed by him and published to the whole church. The general council of Nice was assembled against Arianism in 325. Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret say that Pope Sylvester was not able to come to it in person on account of his great age, but that he sent his legates. Gelasius of Cyzicus mentions that in it "Osius held the place of the Bishop of Rome, together with the Roman priests Vito and Vincentius." These three are named the first in subscriptions of the bishops in the editions of the acts of that council and in Socrates, who expressly places them before Alexander, patriarch of Alexandria, and Eustathius, patriarch of Antioch. St Sylvester greatly advanced religion by a punctual discharge of all the duties of his exalted station during the space of twenty-one years and eleven months; and died on the 1st of December 335. He was buried in the cemetery of Priscilla. Pope Sergius II translated his body and deposited it under the altar in a church dedicated to God in his memory. Mention is made of an altar consecrated to God in his honour at Verona, about the year 500; and his name occurs in the ancient Martyrology called St Jerom's, published by Florentinius, and in those of Bede, Ado, Usuard, &c. Pope Gregory IX, in 1227, made his festival general in the Latin church; the Greeks keep it on the 10th January.

After a prodigious effusion of Christian blood almost all the world over, during the space of three hundred years, the persecuting kingdoms at length laid down their arms and submitted to the faith and worship of God crucified for us. This ought to be to us a subject of thanksgiving. But do our lives express this faith? Does it triumph in our hearts? It is one of its first precepts that in all our actions we make God our begin-

ning and end, and have only his divine honour and his holy law in view. We ought, therefore, so to live that the days, hours, and moments of the year may form a crown made up of good works, which we may offer to God. Our forgetfulness of him who is our last end, in almost all that we do, calls for a sacrifice of compunction at the close of the year; but this cannot be perfect or acceptable to God unless we sincerely devote our whole hearts and lives to his holy love for the time to come. Let us therefore examine into the sources of former omissions, failures, and transgressions, and take effectual measures for our amendment and for the perfect regulation of all our affections and actions for the future, or that part of our life which may remain.

*The following feasts are celebrated on December 31:*

ST COLUMBA, virgin and martyr: ST MELANIA, who lived in the sixth century: and ST SYLVESTER, Pope, 335, appointed by God to govern His Church in the first years of her temporal prosperity and triumph over her enemies; he was ordained a priest by Pope Marcellinus.

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